

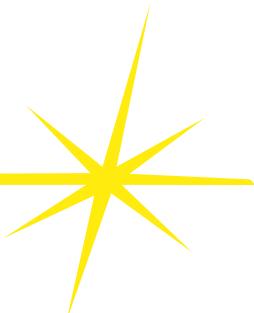


*Hometown services. Hometown strengths.  
Hometown solutions.*

# DUEL™

Developing Utility Expertise  
and Leadership™

[WWW.MMUA.ORG](http://WWW.MMUA.ORG)



# Developing Utility Expertise and Leadership™

**DUEL™ equips current and aspiring utility leaders with the core competencies needed to shape organizational culture, enhance team performance, and drive long-term success.**

This program is designed specifically for municipal utility professionals, combining a shared foundation in essential leadership skills with a flexible, customizable menu of courses from which to choose. It's not a one-size-fits-all program—each participant tailors their learning to match their individual role, goals, and interests.



**The DUEL program helps develop practical, adaptable leaders for today's hometown utilities.** Focused on the realities of municipal operations, DUEL blends cohort-based foundational leadership training with virtual customizable electives. DUEL's presenters are experts in their fields. The program employs real-world case studies and peer collaboration throughout the process, equipping current and aspiring utility leaders with the insight, skills, and connections to guide their organizations confidently into the future.

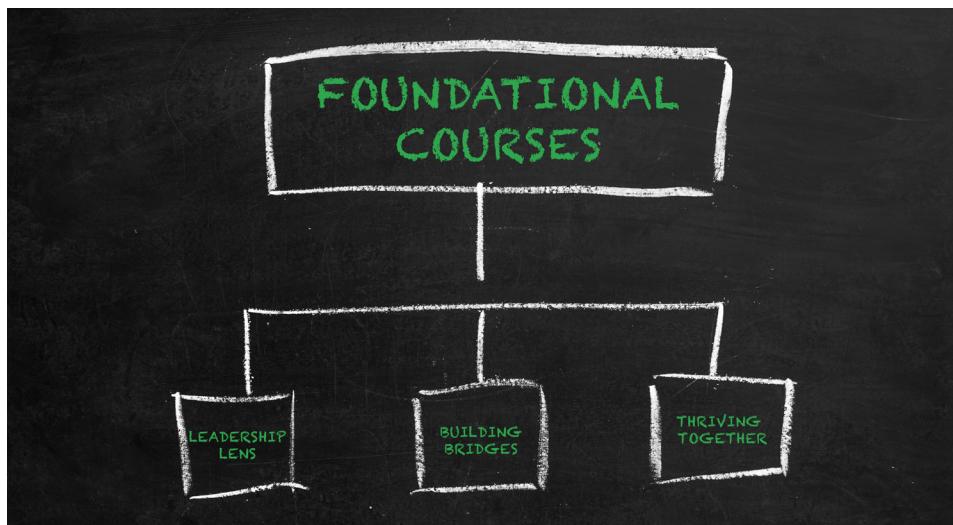
# UTILITIES U™



Participants completing the foundational cohort-based learning sessions and at least eight (8) elective courses will earn an MMUA utilities leadership certificate. Upon completing DUEL and receiving their certificate, leaders will be eligible for ongoing engagement in a facilitated peer group that will continue to serve as a support and a resource long after the formal program ends.

## Foundational courses: cohort-based deep dives

All participants will take part in a series of three in-person foundational courses that are held in two-day sessions. This format allows for extensive discussion of specialized content, experiential learning, and the opportunity to build relationships with a network of peers.



# 1

## LEADERSHIP LENS: YOUR UTILITY, YOUR STYLE, YOUR PATH FORWARD

### **Municipal utilities 101**

Gain a foundational understanding of how municipal utilities operate, their role in serving communities, and their contributions to public infrastructure. This course covers the history and benefits of the municipal model and provides the groundwork for effectively telling the municipal utility story.

### **Electric utilities landscape**

Explore how electricity is generated, transmitted, and delivered in today's energy markets. This course traces the evolution from traditional bilateral agreements to modern financial energy markets, with a focus on the Mid-Continent Independent System Operator (MISO), Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), and implications of the changing energy landscape.

### **Leading a municipal utility**

Dive into the governance and regulatory frameworks that shape municipal utilities in Minnesota. Topics include ownership models, the roles of city councils and utility commissions, statutory requirements, transparency and data practices, and legal considerations.

### **Leading strategically in the utilities sector**

Learn the core elements of strategic leadership, including how to craft and communicate a compelling vision, align resources, and develop a strategic plan that drives organizational success in the utility sector.

### **Leveraging DiSC® for effective leadership—an introduction**

Using the DiSC® assessment, participants will gain insight into their own behavioral style and learn how to recognize and adapt to the styles of others. This short module lays the foundation for using DiSC throughout the curriculum to build stronger, more effective teams.

# 2

## BUILDING BRIDGES: CONNECTING PLANS, PROJECTS, AND PEOPLE

### **Gas utilities landscape**

Gain a practical introduction to the structure, operations, and strategic considerations of municipal utilities and the natural gas markets—whether your community operates a gas utility or not. This course explores how gas utilities serve their communities, the regulatory and safety frameworks that guide their operations, the relationship between gas markets and electricity costs, and the evolving challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

### **From peer to leader**

Navigate the unique challenges of transitioning from colleague to leader. This course practices strategies for building credibility, maintaining positive relationships, and leading effectively using a mentor/coach framework. Participants will explore how to establish authority, set expectations, and cultivate a high-performing team.

### **Leading with DiSC**

Leaders will continue to gain insight into their own behavioral tendencies and learn to recognize and adapt to the styles of others. Through a mix of theory and hands-on exercises, leaders will improve communication, strengthen team dynamics, and develop strategies for leading diverse personalities.

### **Project management essentials for utility leaders**

Master project management essentials for the utility sector. Build skills in navigating resource, timeline, budget, quality, and risk management. Learn strategies for both small operational projects and large capital initiatives, adapting your approach to project scope and complexity.

# 3

## THRIVING TOGETHER: LEADERSHIP FOR DYNAMIC TEAMS AND EVOLVING CHALLENGES

### **Municipal water utilities landscape**

This session introduces leaders to the operational, regulatory, and strategic dimensions of municipal water utilities. Participants will gain insight into how water systems are governed, funded, maintained, and regulated, with emphasis on infrastructure planning, public health standards, and environmental stewardship.

### **Data and analytics for municipal utilities**

This module provides a high-level overview of the types of data municipal utilities must collect and analyze to enhance efficiency, meet reporting requirements, and communicate impact. Designed for utility leaders, this session emphasizes the importance of identifying relevant data sets, understanding their strategic value, and using them to inform decisions and tell the utility's story.

### **Teams, culture, and change**

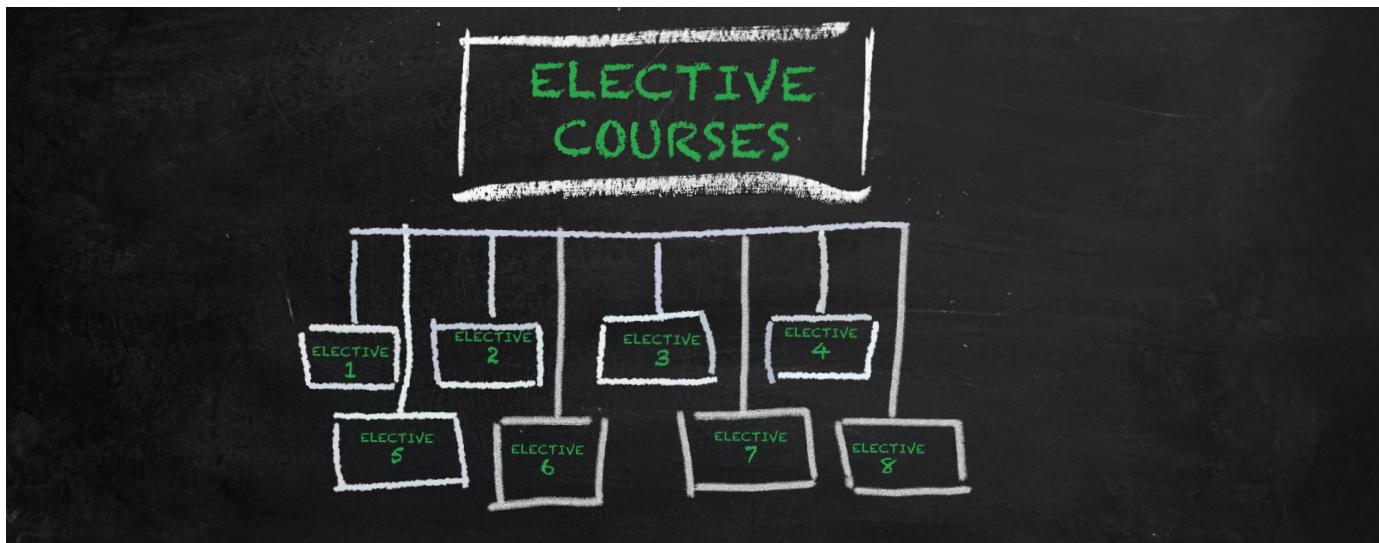
Discover the essentials of a strong organizational culture—shared values, intentional behaviors, and daily practices that spark engagement, collaboration, and innovation. Learn to build a culture where people feel connected, empowered, and inspired. This session explores high-performing team dynamics and offers leaders practical tools to drive change with clarity and resilience, maintaining cultural integrity and team strength—especially in municipal utilities.

### **Interactive capstone project**

Participants will apply their learning to develop a strategic initiative aimed at improving operational efficiency, service delivery, or sustainability within their municipal utility. Each leader will identify a key challenge and design a solution framework aligned with long-term utility goals. Capstone presentations will be shared with peers for feedback and collaborative learning.

## Elective courses

The DUEL program features a wide variety of elective educational courses. Program participants will choose the eight elective courses that best fit their needs and interests. The classes will be offered virtually over the course of a year, and additional courses may be added as hot topics arise.



### Bonding and financing tools for municipal utilities

This course will provide utility leaders with a comprehensive understanding of the financial tools and strategies available for funding infrastructure projects, managing debt, and ensuring long-term fiscal health. Explore the intricacies of municipal bonds, funding mechanisms, and financial management critical to the sustainability and growth of utility operations.

### Building a strategic utility budget: managing resources for sustainable growth

This course will equip leaders with a comprehensive overview of how to create and manage a utility budget. We will cover the building blocks of budgeting including important background work such as rate studies, salary surveys, and other benchmarking. The course will also cover estimating revenues and expenditures, the importance of financial policies, forecasting, and capital planning.

### Collaborative leadership: working with councils and commissions

This course will examine the skills and strategies necessary for effectively engaging with local councils, commissions, and other governing bodies. Leaders will learn how to navigate the complex dynamics of municipal decision-making, build strong relationships with elected officials and commissioners, and advocate for policies that support the growth and sustainability of utility operations.

### Crisis communication and media relations for utility leaders

In today's fast-paced media environment, utility leaders must be prepared to communicate clearly, confidently, and strategically—especially during times of crisis. This course equips participants with the tools and techniques to manage public messaging, engage with media outlets, and maintain trust with stakeholders when the stakes are high.

### Crisis leadership in the utilities sector: navigating challenges and ensuring continuity

Learn the skills and strategies necessary to effectively respond to and manage a crisis. The course will help you build resilience and readiness, preparing you to navigate difficult challenges.

### **Critical thinking for effective decision making**

This course will help enhance your decision-making skills in both personal and professional contexts. Learn various decision-making techniques, improve critical thinking abilities, and develop tools to navigate complex decisions with more confidence.

### **Future-ready leadership: succession planning and cross-training for utilities**

This course equips utility leaders with the tools and strategies to build a resilient leadership pipeline and ensure operational continuity through effective succession planning and cross-training. As the utility sector faces rapid change, aging infrastructure, and workforce transitions, preparing future-ready leaders is no longer optional—it's essential.

### **Mastering grant writing for utilities: securing funding for growth and innovation**

This course will provide leaders with the essential skills and strategies to write successful grant proposals, from identifying funding sources to submitting well-crafted proposals that meet the needs and expectations of the funders.

### **Navigating the interview process: identifying talent with integrity and compliance**

This course will equip new leaders with the skills necessary to conduct effective and legal interviews. Topics will focus on enhancing leadership capabilities in asking the right questions, assessing talent, making informed hiring decisions, and fostering a positive candidate experience.

### **Negotiation skills for utility leaders: collaboration and stakeholder engagement**

Utility leaders are front and center when negotiation is needed. From daily work group discussions and inter-departmental problem-solving to more complex situations such as developing labor agreements, nailing down the terms of business contracts, and addressing service territory changes, successful negotiation with a diverse range of stakeholders is an essential part of your professional toolkit. This course will acquaint you with the basic negotiation skills needed to drive strategic outcomes, foster collaboration, and maintain positive relationships across all levels of utility engagement.

### **Regulatory knowledge and compliance in municipal utilities: navigating challenges for operational success**

This course will provide leaders with the tools and resources needed to navigate the complex landscape of utility regulations. Learn how to interpret and apply regulations effectively, identify potential compliance risks, and implement best practices for maintaining compliance across all areas of operations.

### **Strategic risk management in the utilities sector: safeguarding operations and ensuring resilience**

This course will equip utility leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to protect critical infrastructure from cyber threats and other areas of risk. Learn about the fundamentals of cybersecurity, the unique challenges faced by the grid, and strategies for safeguarding infrastructure and data.

### **Telling the municipal utilities story: crafting a compelling narrative for community engagement**

Discover how to effectively communicate the value, challenges, and impact of municipal utility services to diverse audiences. Through a blend of storytelling techniques and strategic messaging, you will learn how to craft compelling narratives that highlight the essential role municipal utilities play in the community.

### **Understanding human resources basics and employment law**

Gain practical insights into the foundational aspects of human resources, including the employee life cycle, while also diving into important employment laws including those addressing discrimination, workplace safety, labor rights, and compliance.

# Register now at [www.mmua.org/events](http://www.mmua.org/events). Cohorts are kicking off throughout the year!

## CONTACT US



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Hometown solutions.*