



FasterCures LeadersLink Mentors and Experts Responsibilities

Background

The FasterCures LeadersLink program builds on the Milken Institute's history of developing emerging leaders by providing networking, training, and mentorship to a select group of nonprofit research and development (R&D) innovators. LeadersLink is designed to support the personal development of a new generation of nonprofit leaders poised to drive systemic change across the biomedical ecosystem.

Mentors

An important component of LeadersLink is its emphasis on mentorship. Mentors help participants grow and develop as leaders through personal and professional advising. Mentors are screened for areas of expertise, willingness to fulfill program responsibilities, and availability to participate in program activities. Mentors are matched to applicants based on aligned interests and priority/expertise areas.

Mentor Responsibilities and Expectations:

- provide guidance, feedback, and support related to mentees' capstone projects and stated professional goals and needs, including help building relevant relationships;
- meet with mentees in person or virtually at least quarterly (preferably monthly);
- participate in quarterly engagement with fellow cohort participants and mentors through topic-focused and open forum sessions;
- be available to attend program activities and in-person events associated with this program, including the annual **Milken Institute Future of Health Summit** (tentatively scheduled for the first week of November of each year in Washington, DC).

Unlike experts, mentors are expected to support participants' growth and development more broadly. If needed, mentors may request support for travel costs to attend in-person program-related convenings; however, FasterCures cannot guarantee coverage of these expenses.

Experts

In addition, FasterCures will recruit a pool of individuals with expertise in relevant areas to provide episodic advice and counsel to LeadersLink participants as they work on their capstone projects. These experts are not directly paired with a single mentee.

The focus for the 2026–2027 cohort is **advancing research through strategic industry partnerships**. Participants will propose a capstone project aligned with this focus to advance their efforts over the two-year program period.

Relevant expertise in advancing research through strategic industry partnership may include:*

- identifying and evaluating potential industry partners;
- initiating and developing relationships and partnership strategies with biopharma/medtech companies aligned with nonprofit research goals;
- understanding partner incentives, priorities, decision-making processes, and partnership value;
- structuring research collaboration agreements (e.g., memoranda of understanding, data-sharing agreements, intellectual property terms) and advising agreement structures for ethical, transparent industry collaboration;
- negotiating partnership roles, expectations, timelines, and deliverables;
- managing ongoing relationships with industry and patient organization partners;
- coordinating cross-sector or multi-stakeholder research initiatives;
- identifying opportunities for cofunding, codevelopment, or shared research projects;
- developing internal guidelines to navigate the rules of engagement with industry partners and/or patient organizations;
- coordinating precompetitive knowledge- and data sharing consortia, committees, or forums;
- collaborating to support patient engagement and patient participation throughout the R&D lifecycle (e.g., clinical protocol design, patient advisory groups, patient preference studies, developing outcome measures, clinical trial recruitment);
- providing financial support to advance research activities; and
- collaborating on advocacy activities that address research needs and priorities.

**Note: Experience in all listed areas is not required to be an expert, even experience in just one of the listed areas is sufficient to volunteer as an expert!*

Expert Responsibilities and Expectations:

- provide guidance, feedback, and support related to mentees' stated professional goals and capstone projects in the area of advancing research through strategic industry partnerships
- be willing and able to commit up to 10 hours per year, pro bono, to meet in person or virtually with any of the LeadersLink participants seeking assistance, or to conduct webinars or present at program meetings within their area of expertise
- be available, if possible, to attend the annual **Milken Institute Future of Health Summit** (tentatively scheduled for the first week of November of each year in Washington, DC).