HEADQUARTERS, NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. — So you want to be NAVAIR’s next leader? Where do you start?

Potential applicants to NAVAIR’s Leadership Development Program learned the answers to these questions and more at a national application seminar held here April 24.

The command's flagship leadership program gives mid- to senior-grade employees the opportunity to broaden their leadership and management skills, organizational knowledge and worldview, while establishing networks with peers and senior leaders across the command and throughout the Navy and Department of Defense.

“Thank you for being here and for making this a step in your leadership development journey,” Steve Cricchi, assistant commander for corporate operations and total force, told employees at the seminar. “It’s not easy to apply to this program. It’s very competitive. The fact you’re here means you’re willing to put the time and effort in to pull a competitive package together.”
Employees take the first step in their leadership development journey

Approximately one-third of applicants to the program are accepted.

Applicants must focus on the five executive core qualifications (ECQs) identified by the Office of Personnel Management to assess their executive experience and potential:

- Leading change
- Leading people
- Results-driven
- Business acumen
- Building coalitions

“ECQs measure the leadership and competencies that are the recipe for good leadership,” said Tom Rudowsky, deputy assistant commander for logistics and industrial operations. “They instill the criteria for what makes a good leader.”

The seminar addressed how to write the application package, including the ECQs, work experience and career goals.

Current program participants shared examples of their applications and gave tips on how to apply.

“Think like a sculptor,” said Lt. Cmdr. Jason Brotherton, who has been in the program for 18 months. “Take a lot of material and sculpt away the parts you don’t need.”

The three- to five-year program includes job shadowing, mentoring, five leadership courses and a six-month job rotation, among other activities and initiatives.

Both Cricchi and NAVAIR Developmental Programs Manager James Ward emphasized the benefits of networking within the program, where employees can broaden their professional networks across the organization and the entire Department of the Navy.

"We want to shrink NAVAIR by creating a larger network across all sites. The networking you will gain is crucial to your success in the future," Ward said.

A second application seminar is scheduled for May 15. Applications will be accepted July 9 through Aug. 24, and applicants will be notified of their acceptance in January 2019.
“NLDP [NAVAIR Leadership Development Program] expects you to be selfish about your personal development. You can fit it into a very busy professional life, and it’s important that you do,” advised Steve Cricchi, assistant commander for corporate operations and total force, at an NLDP application seminar April 24 in Patuxent River, Md. The program develops high potential military and civilian NAVAIR employees by broadening their leadership, management, organizational knowledge and worldview. (U.S. Navy photo)

Tom Rudowsky, deputy assistant commander for logistics and industrial operations, briefs potential applicants to the NAVAIR Leadership Development Program on how to write a successful application. “Leadership is the ability to influence outcomes,” he said, cautioning applicants to ask themselves, “How did you influence to alter the outcome for a better result?” (U.S. Navy photo)