Launched in 1992, the Michigan Political Leadership Program (MPLP) is the only bipartisan public policy leadership program in Michigan. In line with that history and mission, MPLP plans a long-term effort to recruit and train politicians who become effective public officials. MPLP has trained more than 600 men and women, who are now capable of building bipartisan and solutions-oriented governing networks and committed to building public trust.

MPLP provides 24 annual fellowships valued to cost $12,000 each. The program trains individuals – equally divided among men and women, Democrats and Republicans (and a few independents), in public policy analysis and process, personal leadership development, effective governance, political campaign management, ethics, bipartisanship and public service. Thirty percent of our alumni are from racial minorities and fifty percent are women. The fellows come together for 10 weekends of instruction with more than 65 notable presenters in eight cities around the State.

Our latest research shows that MPLP graduates are two times as likely to run for public office and three times more likely to win. At least one half of MPLP’s graduates serve or have served in elected or appointed public office. MPLP’s alums include a former mayor of Detroit, a former speaker of the Michigan House, a current House Minority Leader, and current and former state House and Senate members and scores of village, township and statewide officers and administrators. Eleven MPLP graduates are now serving in the Michigan Legislature, and come together as the new MPLP Legislative Caucus. The 27 MPLP alumni who have served in the Michigan House and Senate have furthered civility, fostering political relationships across the aisle and across the state.

The curriculum draws from evidence-based and time-tested lessons in leadership, state and local governance, intergovernmental relations, public policy issues, campaign planning and operations, political and media messaging, ethics and conflict resolution, legislative and administrative processes, and public opinion and representation. The program has a 100 percent completion rate and nearly universal alumni engagement.

This innovative program is directed by Susy Avery, who served as Chair of the Michigan Republican Party and the Hon. Steve Tobocman, who served as Democratic Floor Leader in the state House. MPLP is embedded in the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) at Michigan State University, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, where IPPSR receives operational and educational support.