



# COMING SPRING 2025: NEW AE-MBA PROGRAM



*BY ERIN BALLAS, QAS,  
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In the spring of 2025, FSAE will be offering a new 10-week virtual education program based on traditional MBA principles, specifically for association executives – **the AE-MBA.**

The AE-MBA program provides in-depth training on finances, people management and organizational leadership. A cohort model, AE-MBA brings association professionals together from around the southeast for five units that explore vision, goals and planning process; coaching teams and serving members; empowering people and systems of management; demystifying finances; and applying finances: growing the bottom line.

The program's goal is to make you a better leader and manager (or a new CEO), while having the necessary skills to strengthen your association for the future and grow your bottom line.

FSAE Board Member and Deputy Executive Director for the FL Goodwill Association, **Erin Ballas, QAS, AE-MBA** participated in this program in 2024 and shares her experience:

“I gained a lot from this program and it was completely worth my investment of time and money,” Erin said. “I learned tangible ideas I could implement immediately to strengthen our organization and better manage people. This includes working with members, hiring a new CEO for an organization we serve, as well as personally being a better board member for our associations.

“The finance modules helped me streamline our organizational processes and provided an intensive framework to help us make our business better. Plus, I learned real examples of how to maximize our cashflow and make our money work better for us.

“The curriculum and discussions provided ample management techniques and examples for interviewing as well as the day-to-day managing of people. Multiple options are presented almost like a choose your own adventure, with scenarios based on what would work best for your business model and your organization’s culture.

“People are the backbone of any organization and the course stresses not only hiring the right people, but also how to do that. Additionally, we discussed how to best manage your team, including what to do if someone is not the right person, or it’s not the right position for that person.

“The organizational leadership modules provided ample tools to evaluate your leadership style as well as your business goals, including during periods of transition and change. Managing change and modifying goals accordingly make the goals achiev-

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able. Especially with the small teams that most associations have, knowing how to grow and how your leadership style can positively or negatively affect that growth is important.”

The five units are self-study with a zoom meeting every two-weeks for the cohort and include expert speakers on specific topics like HR and accounting in associations.

“It’s interesting to hear the different perspectives and approaches from other organizations and other states,” Erin continued. “You do build a rapport with your cohort through breakout sessions on zoom and discussing scenarios we’re all dealing with in our organizations. I know I have people around the country I can call on if I need a sounding board for future organizational challenges.

“Our guest speakers were seasoned association professionals that provided relevant experiences and potential pitfalls on each of the topics. It’s really helpful to have different, real-world perspectives and best practices in addition to the course materials.”

Who should consider the AE-MBA for career growth?

“The best person for this course is someone wanting to move into a C-Suite role, or someone in that position that wants to strengthen management and financial knowledge and skills,” Erin said. “It’s designed for mid-career professionals who are preparing to move up – and it is a ‘one-and-done’ certificate course, so there’s no recertification hours or continued commitment. You need to have the time to devote to completing the units and participating on the calls, but then you have the

information and credentials and are ready for the next level of your career.”

The AE-MBA program starts April 15, 2025. Grants will also be available to participate. The 2025 Grants open in December and close February 28, 2025.

[Learn more or register today at www.fsae.org/AE-MBA-program](http://www.fsae.org/AE-MBA-program)

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