

Professional Biography Guide & Examples

A simple guide for preparing the biography submitted with your ELP application.

What is this biography for?

Your biography helps the ELP community get to know your professional background, leadership experience, and the perspective you will bring to the cohort. It does not need to be exhaustive, and it should not simply repeat your resume.

Recommended length and style

- Aim for approximately 200-350 words. A little shorter or longer is fine if it reads naturally.
- Write in third person (for example, “Jordan leads...” rather than “I lead...”).
- Use 2-4 short paragraphs and a professional, conversational tone.
- Submit a clean Word or PDF document. Special design or formatting is not required.

What to include

- **Current role and organization** - what you do now and the scope or focus of your work.
- **Career context** - selected experiences that help explain your professional or leadership journey.
- **Leadership and impact** - accomplishments, responsibilities, expertise, or ways you contribute to teams and organizations.
- **Education or credentials** - include what is relevant; you do not need to list everything.
- **Community involvement or personal context** - optional, and only if it adds something meaningful to your story.

A simple structure that works

Paragraph 1

Start with your current role, organization, field, and a sentence or two about the work you lead or support.

Paragraph 2

Add the most relevant career experience, leadership responsibilities, accomplishments, or areas of expertise.

Paragraph 3 (optional)

Close with education, professional or community involvement, leadership interests, or a brief personal detail if you would like to include one.

Illustrative examples

These fictionalized examples show different approaches that all work. Your biography should sound like you and reflect your own career stage and experience.

EXAMPLE 1

Concise, leadership-focused bio

Jordan Ellis is a public safety leader with 16 years of experience in patrol, supervision, community engagement, and professional training. Recently promoted to captain at a municipal police department, Jordan oversees personnel and operations while supporting leadership development across the department.

Throughout Jordan's career, they have served in several district and citywide assignments and helped establish a crisis intervention training initiative that expanded into a regional resource for law enforcement professionals. Jordan also serves as an academy instructor, working with recruits and newly promoted supervisors on leadership, decision-making, and field operations.

Jordan is committed to mentorship, professional development, and strengthening relationships between public safety organizations and the communities they serve. They are an active member of a statewide professional association and are especially interested in developing the next generation of leaders.

Why it works: clear current role, selected accomplishments, and leadership focus without becoming a full career history.

EXAMPLE 2

Developing / early-career leader

Maya Chen is an Event Services Coordinator at a convention and exhibition center, where she works with clients, internal departments, and industry partners to coordinate events from planning through execution. Her role has strengthened her skills in communication, project management, problem-solving, and cross-functional collaboration.

Before moving into the events industry, Maya worked in an administrative role for an environmental services company. That experience sparked her interest in managing projects from start to finish and reinforced the value of strong teamwork and attention to detail.

Maya earned a bachelor's degree in 2021 and is continuing to build her professional expertise through industry training and association involvement. She is pursuing a professional event-management credential and is excited to continue developing her leadership skills, expanding her network, and growing her impact within the hospitality and events field.

Why it works: it does not try to manufacture decades of accomplishments. It focuses on trajectory, transferable skills, and professional growth.

More ways a strong biography can look

EXAMPLE 3

Experienced professional / senior leader

Thomas Reed is Senior Vice President of Government Affairs and Public Policy at a statewide health association, where he leads policy and advocacy efforts on behalf of community-based health organizations. He oversees a team of policy professionals and works with public officials, member organizations, and external partners to advance priorities related to access, sustainability, and health policy.

Thomas has more than a decade of experience in government, legislative strategy, health policy, and stakeholder engagement. Before joining the association, he served in senior legislative roles within state government, advising executive leadership on policy priorities and coordinating across agencies and levels of government. Earlier in his career, he worked in the state legislature as a chief of staff and legal counsel.

Throughout his career, Thomas has focused on bringing people together to solve complex problems at the intersection of policy, government, and public service. He holds a Juris Doctor and a master's degree in political science, as well as an undergraduate degree in government and philosophy.

Why it works: it establishes scope and seniority quickly, selects only the most relevant prior experience, and closes with a clear through-line.

Optional: adding a personal dimension

A professional biography can include a brief personal or community dimension when it helps explain your leadership perspective. For example, an applicant might mention mentoring young professionals, serving on a nonprofit board, being the first in their family to enter a field, or an outside interest that is meaningful to them. This is entirely optional.

What not to overthink

- You do not need to provide a complete chronology of every position you have held.
- You do not need to turn the biography into a leadership essay or a second application statement.
- You do not need to disclose personal information unless you want it to be part of your story.

Before you submit

- Does the first paragraph make your current role and organization clear?
- Have you selected the experiences that best explain your leadership journey rather than listing everything?
- Is the biography written consistently in third person?
- Does it sound natural when you read it aloud?
- Have you checked names, titles, organization names, dates, and credentials for accuracy?

One last reminder

There is no single “perfect” ELP biography. The goal is a clear, accurate, readable introduction to who you are professionally and what you bring to the cohort.