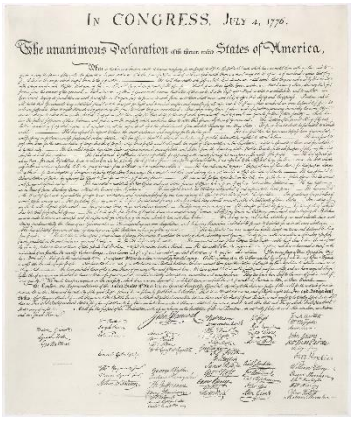
AMERICA'S FOUNDING DOCUMENTS

VISION AND VALUES


IN CONGRESS. JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America,

Beginning with the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, this session uses the nation's founding documents to explore the role of organizational **vision and values** in everyday leadership. After laying out the context for the creation of these two documents, we carry forward to later eras when people contested the vision and values of these frameworks in ways that reinterpreted and expanded the founders' original meanings. In the mid-nineteenth century, we examine the calls for reform from the women's suffragists and abolitionists. For this era, we also explore Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, an attempt to reestablish a national vision by reframing the symbiotic relationship between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. We then follow on to look at the politics and controversy around the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments, which extended due process and suffrage to African-Americans but pointedly excluded women, an omission that took another half-century to rectify.

In each section, the instructor provides background context on the document or issues being discussed and offers an analogy that links these incidents to issues participants face in their job. Participants then go into small groups to discuss ways to apply insights from the past to become more effective in their daily work. From a leadership and performance perspective, some of the significant touchpoints include:

- The necessity of creating rules and regulations that support without diminishing the organization's vision and values.
- Strategies for influencing even those with whom you ultimately disagree.
- Tips for communicating a change and gaining followers.
- A proven method used by the most successful reformers to paint a compelling picture of the future and persuade people to abandon the status quo.