



LEADERSHIP FORT SMITH

LEARN. CONNECT. LEAD.

Leadership Fort Smith Class of 2024 Application

Program Information & Selection Process

What do we do in Leadership Fort Smith?

Leadership Fort Smith consists of one overnight Opening Retreat and 10 day-long sessions from August to May that cover relevant, contemporary issues in our community. Some examples of session topics are Education, Economic Development, Healthcare, Local and State Government. Sessions are typically 7:45 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Our sessions are full of one-of-a-kind experiences, information, and time spent with classmates. During the Opening Retreat and program sessions, there will be some fun physical team building activities and extensive walking. Agendas will be sent out prior to each session describing what to expect for the day.

Our motto "Learn. Connect. Lead." states our goal very simply -- to give participants learning opportunities, connect them to the community, and give them the tools to lead. We also use the phrase "back-stage pass" because our sessions give the class an amazing behind the scenes experience. It is both a professional development and community leadership program like no other!

Who can apply and how do I get in?

Anyone who lives or works in the Fort Smith area can apply for LFS. Be sure that all parts of your application are completed and turned in on time. The selection committee will review each application, including resume, letters of recommendation, and your essay responses. The selection committee is made up of volunteers from both LFS Alumni and the Chamber's Education Committee. Typically 25 people are selected each year and we always have more applicants than spots available. Alternates are chosen in the event that a participant cannot accept their spot in the class.

What is the selection committee looking for?

Leadership Fort Smith is designed to educate and motivate citizens to become leaders in our community. Participation in LFS comes with strings attached – we expect graduates to continue serving the Fort Smith Region, be a champion of community projects, and lead the future of Fort Smith. Therefore, the selection committee will be looking for both potential leaders and current leaders who have the ability to effectively participate in our community. The committee wants to see that an applicant has the motivation and the ability to work on projects or challenges, develop a solution, and take action.

I've applied before and was not accepted. Why should I apply again?

Each year the selection committee makes every effort to put together a diverse class, representative of multiple business sectors, backgrounds, ages, etc. There is always a chance that an applicant comes from a crowded demographic pool that year. For example, if there are 15 lawyers in the applicant pool, it's going to be less likely that a particular lawyer will be admitted that year. Conversely, if there is only one applicant from the non-profit field, it is more likely that individual would be admitted. Of course, the larger the applicant pool, the tougher it becomes to select only 25 participants – so please don't be discouraged if you are not admitted the first time. We strongly encourage you to apply again!

Why should I commit so much time away from work for Leadership Fort Smith?

Leadership Fort Smith is more than just another accomplishment on your resume. LFS is a professional development opportunity that benefits the employee, the employer, and our region. It is a commitment to your community and a call to action. The time spent learning and getting connected through the sessions is crucial to having the tools you need to be a leader in our community. Upon graduation, you will be connected to an active, energized network of alumni that will help keep you informed, motivated, and engaged in community efforts. The time spent with your classmates will create a special bond; you will build lasting friendships and a network of trusted colleagues.

I've lived in the River Valley my entire life. Why should I do Leadership Fort Smith?

The goal of the LFS curriculum is to provide our participants with a 'back-stage pass' experience. You are going to see, hear, and learn the ins-and-outs of many aspects of our region that most citizens wouldn't normally experience. We guarantee you will learn something at each session. In addition, the program will introduce you to other community-minded people from all different industries and backgrounds -- and maybe even get you out of your comfort zone!

Class of 2024 Application Instructions

Apply online:

All the application instructions, questions, and information are available below. You will be able to fill out the application, upload your resume, and complete both essay responses. Two recommendation letters must be emailed or mailed in to our office. (see below for additional information on recommendation letters.)

Electronic signatures are available in the application form for the applicant and the applicant's supervisor/employer. If preferred, a downloadable copy of the signature form is available and it can then be uploaded to your application.

To save your progress, scroll all the way to the bottom of the application and click "Save".

It is our preference that applicants complete the online application. However, if you need a paper application to fill out, you can download the application from our website or request to have it emailed to you. Completed packets may be mailed to *612 Garrison Avenue, Fort Smith, AR 72901* or **email it directly** to Hannah Cabe at fschamberleadership@gmail.com

A completed packet must include:

1. Completed personal information answers.
2. Resume including current employer, education, community involvement, and any applicable military service.
3. Responses to both essay questions.
4. Two letters of recommendation emailed or mailed to our office.
5. Completion of signature page with employer/supervisor signature (if applicable).
6. Completion of tuition payment procedures with signature.

Two letters of recommendation should include the following:

- The connection to the applicant (how long have you known him/her and in what capacity). It is our preference that at least one recommendation letter should come from a professional colleague.
- The applicant’s leadership ability, accomplishments, teamwork, etc. that you have observed. Share their motivation and ability to take the lead on projects.
- Explain why the applicant would be an excellent participant for LFS and how he/she could make an impact in our community.
- Please include contact information.

ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 p.m. on FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2023

All applicants will be notified of the selection committee’s recommendations by the middle of June. We will then publicly announce the new class at the Commencement & New Class Reception Event on July 13th.

APPLICATION

Name

First

Last

Preferred First Name (if different from above)

Employer

Phone

Email

Have you previously applied for Leadership Fort Smith?

Required
 Yes No

Click the link below to view the full schedule:

[Class of 2024 Schedule](#)

Required
 Yes No

[Have you confirmed that you can attend all sessions planned for the Class of 2024?](#)

Please upload your current resume/CV. Be sure your resume also includes education, community involvement, volunteer activities, and any applicable military service.

Resume

Please upload your resume in PDF or Word format.

Race/Ethnicity

Optional, but we do hope to have a very diverse class!

Age

Optional, but we do hope to have a diverse class!

Please Select

Male Female

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Please submit answers for each of the following essay questions. Application is only considered complete with both questions answered.

What is one of your proudest accomplishments, either personally and professionally? Explain how you demonstrated leadership, perseverance, and/or a can-do attitude to accomplish your goal.

Essay 1

What motivates you to apply for Leadership Fort Smith and what do you hope to gain or learn from the program? What do you feel you can contribute to the program and ultimately, our community?

Essay 2

Recommendation Letters

Please submit confidential letters of recommendation by requesting those letters to be emailed to Hannah Cabe at fschamberleadership@gmail.com or mailed to 612 Garrison Avenue, Fort Smith, AR 72901.

Please call 479-783-3111 with any questions.

Signatures: Statement of Commitment

Statement of Commitment with Signature: Applicant

By signing and completing this application, I affirm that all of my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

If selected for the program, I understand:

- I am expected to attend all LFS Sessions, including the Opening Retreat which is mandatory.
- There will be some activities in addition to the regular session that I may be expected to participate in related to a class project or session content.
- There will be extensive walking and some physical activities during sessions. Reasonal accommodations can be made for those needing assistance.
- Tuition for the program is \$1500 and all participants are asked to pay \$250 personally to show their commitment to the program.
- The full amount of tuition is due to the Chamber no later than August 24, 2023 unless other arrangements have been made with the Director. Those arrangements will be agreed to in writing before the Opening Retreat.
- I may observe things during sessions that are not to be shared publicly, either through social media, photographs, texts, or directly through media outlets.
- I will show respect and courtesy to all participants and guests of the program.
- During sessions, I will be fully engaged and limit use of my cell phone to breaks or for emergencies only.
- I cannot use my participation in Leadership Fort Smith in a political campaign to imply endorsement from the program or the Chamber of Commerce.

By signing below I understand and agree to these statements.

Applicant Signature

Statement of Commitment with Signature: Employer

Our company/organization fully supports the applicant's participation in the Leadership Fort Smith program, should they be selected.

As the applicant's supervisor, I understand that participation in the Leadership Fort Smith program will

require time away from work for scheduled sessions. I also understand that during sessions, my employee should only check work email/messages during scheduled breaks unless an emergency arises.

By signing below, I understand and agree to these statements.

Employer/Supervisor Signature

Printed Name of Supervisor

First

Last

Printed/Hard Copy: Statement of Commitment with Signatures

If your supervisor is not able to sign electronically in your application, please click on this link and print/sign and upload the signatures of commitment with both employer and employee signatures. [Click Here For Signature Form](#)

Upload Signed Form Here

Tuition and Funding

Tuition for each participant is \$1,500 which covers all program costs: meals, transportation, lodging, and materials.

In most cases, a participant's employer sponsors their tuition for the program. We ask that each participant make a personal financial commitment of \$250, due by August 24, 2023.

Financial arrangements can be made, if necessary. We do not want tuition to be a barrier for participation.

The selection committee will not review this information during the class selection process. The manner in which tuition will be paid will have no bearing on selection.

Tuition is non-refundable. If a participant drops out of the program or is removed from the program for any circumstances, tuition will not be pro-rated or refunded.

Tuition is paid directly to the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce and can be paid by cash, check, credit card, or bank draft.

Tuition Payment Options:

- 1. Employer/Organization Sponsored:** Participant is responsible for the \$250 personal payment and employer/organization is billed for remaining \$1250 in tuition. Please let us know in the form below who the invoice should be sent to for payment.
- 2. Personal Payment in Full:** The participant agrees to pay full tuition (or remaining tuition after scholarship has been applied) by cash, check, or credit card by August 24, 2023.
- 3. Personal Payment by Monthly Payment Plan*:** The personal payment of \$250 is due by August 24, 2023 and the remaining tuition can be paid out over 8 months (Sept. – April). In order to participate in the payment plan, an ACH (bank draft) form must be completed in our office before Opening Retreat. Tuition must be paid in full on or before May 1, 2023. If a monthly

payment is missed, the LFS Director will reach out to confirm your continued participation in the program. If two monthly payments are missed, the participant may be suspended from the program until payments are no longer in arrears. *If selecting this plan, please see the signature required below.

Scholarship Information: Tuition Assistance is limited to applicants who represent a non-profit, government, or education institution. Scholarships will be considered by the committee **after** a participant has been selected for the program. If a participant receives a scholarship, they are still responsible for the remaining tuition; the same policies apply to the payment of remaining tuition as outlined in the options above. Scholarships will not exceed half of tuition. Scholarships are not guaranteed and are dependent on the annual support of LFS Alumni. Scholarship award and amount will be determined and eligible participants notified as quickly as possible after selection.

Do you represent a non-profit, education, or government entity?

Yes No

Upon selection, participants are asked to pay a minimum of \$250 personally to show commitment to the program.

Please select from the payment options below to determine the responsibility of the remaining \$1,250 commitment (or amount after any scholarships are awarded).

Payment Options - please select only one:

Option #1: My employer or sponsoring organization will pay the remaining tuition. (Please fill in box below for billing information.)

Option #2: I will personally pay the tuition commitment in full prior to the Opening Retreat.

Option #3: I will personally pay the tuition commitment through a Monthly Payment Plan. (*Please sign agreement below.)

Signature

Today's Date

If you chose Option #1, please indicate who will be responsible for the remaining financial commitment.

(Please include name of billing contact, email, mailing address, and phone number).

Thank you so much for applying for Leadership Fort Smith! The Selection Committee will review all applications and be in touch in June regarding class selection. The Class of 2024 will be announced in July at a celebratory

event.

**In the meantime if you have any questions or concerns, please call Hannah
Cabe at 479-783-3111 or email hcabe@fortsmithchamber.com**