

DISCOVER YOUR COMMUNITY | EXPAND YOUR LEADERSHIP | CREATE LASTING IMPACT

Leadership Hardin County is a premier leadership development experience of the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce. The program is designed to inform, connect, and inspire current and emerging leaders who want to better understand the people, systems, opportunities, and challenges shaping Hardin County.

Through immersive monthly sessions, behind-the-scenes access, community conversations, and a collaborative class project, participants build leadership capacity while gaining a broader understanding of the institutions and issues that influence the county's future.

PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- Strengthen personal leadership skills and self-awareness.
- Develop a deeper understanding of Hardin County's assets, challenges, and opportunities.
- Build meaningful relationships with leaders across business, government, education, nonprofit, healthcare, and military sectors.
- Gain firsthand insight through site visits, panels, guided discussions, and experiential learning.
- Collaborate on a community impact project that leaves a lasting mark on Hardin County.
- Join a growing network of Leadership Hardin County alumni committed to service and civic leadership.

PROGRAM COMMITMENT

Leadership Hardin County is an interactive, cohort-based experience. Because each session builds on the one before it, attendance and engagement are essential. Participants are expected to attend all events, including the Welcome Reception, the mandatory overnight retreat, monthly sessions, community impact project work, and graduation.

Unless otherwise approved in advance by program leadership, participants who miss more than the equivalent of two full program days in total, whether those absences occur as two full days or as a cumulative combination of partial-day absences, may be withdrawn from the program without refund. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss the time commitment with their employer/family members before applying.

Assignments and group projects will be incorporated throughout the program to support leadership development, collaboration, and engagement with the community. Participants are expected to contribute fully, complete all assigned work, and meet stated deadlines.

TUITION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Completed applications must be received by June 12, 2026.

Chamber Member Tuition: \$950

Non-Chamber Member Tuition: \$1,500

President Circle Members receive single-attendee admission to the annual Leadership Hardin County program.

Tuition includes program materials, meals for designated events, reception and graduation costs, and retreat accommodations in a shared non-smoking room.

2026 – 2027 PROGRAM JOURNEY

Leadership Hardin County is a leadership development experience for individuals who are ready to invest in both their own growth and the future of Hardin County. The program is intentionally designed to guide participants from self-awareness to community understanding, from systems thinking to civic engagement, and from learning to meaningful impact. Because each session builds on the one before it, class members are encouraged to **carefully review the full program calendar** and be confident they can honor the time and attendance expectations before completing an application.

Participants are expected to take an active role in their experience by staying informed, understanding program requirements, and arriving prepared to fully engage in each session and related event. Leadership Hardin County is most successful when class members approach the program with a spirit of commitment, professionalism, and personal responsibility. Session topics, speakers, locations, and dates are subject to change, and advance notice will be provided whenever possible.

SESSION 1: LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

June 23, 2026, and June 30, 2026 — a Chamber staff member will contact you to schedule your appointment.

Leadership Hardin County is designed to bring together a **thoughtful and committed** class of leaders from across our community. Because space is limited, submission of an application and participation in the required interview do not guarantee acceptance into the program. The Selection Committee will carefully consider each applicant's leadership potential, commitment to full participation, and overall fit for the Leadership Hardin County experience. Our goal is to select individuals who are prepared to fully engage in the program and contribute meaningfully to the class and the community.

Note: Headshots will be taken for marketing materials, so dress accordingly.

SESSION 2: WELCOME RECEPTION

August 4, 2026 - 6:00 – 8:00 PM (this date is subject to change)

An opening event for class members, alumni, sponsors, and community leaders to begin relationship-building, set expectations, and launch the program year. Invitations will be extended to each class member and one guest. Refreshments and food will be provided, creating a welcoming environment for participants to connect with fellow classmates, Leadership alumni, and key community stakeholders as the program year begins.

SESSION 3: CHAMBER LUNCHEON

August 12, 2026 - 11:30 AM–1:15 PM

Class members will be formally introduced at the August Hardin County Chamber Luncheon. During the event, class members will be seated together at assigned tables, allowing the group to be recognized as the incoming Leadership Hardin County class. The Chamber luncheon provides an opportunity to expand visibility, strengthen business connections, and engage with the broader regional chamber network. All class members are **required to RSVP** by contacting the Chamber in advance of the event.

SESSION 4: LEADERSHIP RETREAT — BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

August 27, 2026 - 9:00 AM – August 28, 2026 - 2:00 PM (Mandatory)

The Leadership Retreat serves as the foundation of the program experience. Participants will strengthen relationships with classmates, explore leadership styles, build communication skills, and engage in meaningful discussions about leadership and the future of Hardin County. This session is designed to establish trust, encourage collaboration, and prepare the class for the year ahead. Retreat lodging is included in program tuition and is based on double occupancy in a shared non-smoking room. Participants who would prefer a single room may request one at their own expense by notifying the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce at least **three weeks prior to the retreat**. Please note that single-occupancy rooms are limited, subject to availability, and cannot be guaranteed.

Session Times will typically start at 8:30 am and end around 4:30 PM. Full session agendas will be provided a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the session.

SESSION 5: HARDIN COUNTY THEN AND NOW — HISTORY, IDENTITY, AND CIVIC FOUNDATIONS

September 24, 2026

This session will explore the rich history of Hardin County and the people, events, and milestones that have shaped the community over time. Class members will be divided into small groups and assigned a specific historical topic or time period to research and present. Each group will be encouraged to share its topic in a meaningful, creative, and engaging way that both informs and entertains the class. The session will also feature presenters who will bring local history to life through stories, insights, and perspectives that highlight the unique character of Hardin County.

SESSION 6: FORT KNOX AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

October 22, 2026

This session offers a behind-the-scenes look at Fort Knox and its significant role in the life and future of Hardin County. Participants will gain a greater understanding of the installation's impact on the regional economy, workforce, infrastructure, and community identity. Through tours, briefings, and discussion, the class will examine the importance of military-civilian partnerships and the ways Fort Knox contributes to both local and regional progress. This session is designed to help participants better understand one of the community's most influential institutions and the opportunities that come from strong regional collaboration.

SESSION 7: GOVERNMENT, CIVIC LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

November 19, 2026

This session focuses on how local leadership works in practice and how decisions are made that shape the future of Hardin County. Participants will hear directly from elected officials, public administrators, and community leaders who are actively involved in governing, policy-making, and civic leadership. Through discussion and real-world examples, the class will explore key issues facing the community and consider how leaders balance competing priorities, limited resources, and long-term community needs. This session is designed to strengthen participants' understanding of public leadership, civic responsibility, and the importance of thoughtful decision-making in building strong communities.

SESSION 8: LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION AND INFLUENCE

December 3, 2026

This session explores how effective leaders communicate, build trust, and influence positive change within their communities. Through discussion, interactive exercises, and insights from local leaders—including members of the Hardin County Chamber's President Circle—participants will examine how communication shapes leadership and community impact. The session will also provide dedicated time for the class to finalize discussions surrounding the community impact project and align on a shared vision for meaningful contribution in Hardin County.

SESSION 9: EDUCATION, TALENT, AND THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

January 21, 2027 (In the event of inclement weather, the make-up date will be January 28, 2027)

This session examines the educational ecosystem that helps prepare Hardin County's future workforce, civic leaders, and community members. Participants will explore the connection between education, workforce readiness, talent retention, and long-term economic success. Through presentations, tours, and discussion, the class will gain insight into the strengths and challenges within local schools, training programs, and post-secondary pathways. Participants will also consider how educational outcomes influence business growth, community vitality, and the region's ability to attract and retain talent.

SESSION 10: HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

February 18, 2027 (In the event of inclement weather, the make-up date will be February 25, 2027)

Participants will explore the network of healthcare providers, support agencies, and human service organizations that contribute to the overall well-being of Hardin County residents. This session highlights the programs, partnerships, and resources available to individuals and families across the community, while also examining the challenges that can affect access, stability, and quality of life. Through presentations, discussion, and site visits, class members will gain a deeper understanding of how agencies work together to meet community needs and where opportunities exist for stronger collaboration and leadership.

SESSION 11: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS GROWTH, AND THE FUTURE OF HARDIN COUNTY

March 18, 2027

This session explores the factors that drive economic development and position Hardin County for long-term success. Participants will examine business growth, workforce strategy, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, investment, and regional competitiveness through presentations, discussion, and site visits. The class will gain a better understanding of how communities attract opportunity, support employers, and create conditions that encourage sustainable growth. This session brings together many of the themes explored throughout the program and challenges participants to think strategically about the future of Hardin County.

SESSION 12: LAW, JUSTICE, AND PUBLIC TRUST

April 22, 2027

This session provides participants with an inside look at the institutions and professionals responsible for upholding law, justice, and public safety in Hardin County. Through visits, presentations, and conversation with members of the legal and judicial community, the class will gain insight into how the justice system functions and the role it plays in maintaining accountability, order, and public confidence. Participants will also examine the broader relationship between justice, public trust, and community well-being, gaining a more informed perspective on the challenges and responsibilities carried by these systems.

SESSION 14: LEADERSHIP WRAP UP

May 20, 2027 - 9:00 – 11:30

This session brings the class together for a reflective wrap-up of the Leadership Hardin County experience, providing participants the opportunity to evaluate the program's sessions, speakers, and outcomes. Through guided discussion and collaborative feedback, participants will share insights, lessons learned, and constructive suggestions aimed at strengthening future classes. The session will also explore ways participants can continue growing as leaders by remaining engaged with one another and supporting the mission and initiatives of the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce. By reflecting on individual growth and collective impact, the class will conclude the program with a renewed commitment to leadership, service, and community involvement.

SESSION 13: COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECT PRESENTATIONS AND GRADUATION

June 3, 2027 — 6:00 PM

The program concludes with the presentation of the class community impact project and a celebration of the growth, relationships, and accomplishments developed throughout the year. Participants will have the opportunity to share the results of their collective work, reflect on what they have learned, and be recognized for fulfilling their commitment to Leadership Hardin County. Graduation also marks the transition from participant to alumni, encouraging continued involvement, service, and leadership within the Hardin County community. Family members, alumni, sponsors, and community leaders will be invited to join in recognizing the graduating class. Class members and guest are free, \$25 for all others attending.

APPLICATION FORM

Please complete all sections. Type or print clearly. Incomplete applications may not be considered.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

FULL NAME: _____

PREFERRED NAME: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

PREFERRED EMAIL: _____

SHIRT SIZE: _____

ALLERGIES/ SPECIAL NEEDS: _____

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

EMPLOYER: _____

JOB TITLE: _____

TIME EMPLOYED: _____

WORK ADDRESS: _____

WORK PHONE: _____

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: _____

CURRENT JOB RESPONSIBILITIES: _____

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

How did you learn about Leadership Hardin County?

Please list community, civic, professional, faith-based, volunteer, or business organizations in which you are currently involved.

What ties or commitments do you have to the Hardin County community?

Why do you want to participate in Leadership Hardin County, and what do you hope to gain from the experience?

How do you hope to use what you learn to improve Hardin County?

What is one of the most important opportunities or challenges facing Hardin County today, and why?

References

Three letters of recommendation are required and **must be submitted with this application**. Letters should be provided by individuals who can address the applicant's leadership potential, character, and community involvement. Incomplete applications, including those missing letters of recommendation, will not be considered.

APPLICANT COMMITMENT

I understand the purpose of Leadership Hardin County and, if selected, I will devote the time and resources necessary to complete the program. I understand that the retreat is mandatory and that meaningful participation throughout the full program is expected. I acknowledge that missing more than two sessions may result in withdrawal from the program without refund. Please review the expectations below carefully. **Initial each statement below to acknowledge understanding.**

- _____ Participants are expected to conduct themselves in a **professional and respectful manner** at all times and to actively engage in each program session.
- _____ Attendance at all program days is required. If an absence is unavoidable, prior approval must be requested in advance. Participants may miss no more than the equivalent of two full program days in total, whether those absences occur as two full days or as a cumulative combination of partial-day absences, including late arrivals, early departures, or time missed for other meetings or obligations. Exceeding this limit may result in removal from the program. No refunds will be issued.
- _____ During sessions, participants are expected to give their full attention to presenters and program activities. Cell phone use for calls or texting **should be limited** to breaks or urgent situations requiring communication with an employer or family member.
- _____ Required attire for all program days is **business casual including the Leadership logo wear** you will be provided, meaning professional yet comfortable clothing such as slacks or khakis, dress shirts or blouses, skirts or dresses of appropriate length, and closed-toe shoes. Jackets or blazers are welcome but not required. **Jeans, t-shirts, athletic wear, and flip-flops should be avoided.**
- _____ Unless otherwise stated, transportation is not included as part of the program. Participants are responsible for arranging and covering all transportation costs, and the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce and Leadership Hardin County will not reimburse or refund any transportation-related expenses.
- _____ To protect the integrity and confidentiality of the program, participants **may not post photos, videos, live streams, or other recordings of any class content**, including presentations, discussions, activities, or materials, on social media during or after sessions, without approval from the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce.
- _____ The Hardin County Chamber of Commerce marketing staff may capture approved photos during sessions for official use. Participants may share content that has been officially released by the Chamber on their personal or company social media pages.
- _____ Additional photos may be taken for monthly blogs, which will be completed by class members for use by the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce, for archival purposes, or for presentation at Leadership Graduation.
- _____ Participants may be exposed to sensitive, confidential, or personally identifiable information during program activities, including during visits to healthcare facilities or other partner locations. This may include seeing or overhearing patient information, names, or other protected details. Participants must maintain strict confidentiality and may not photograph, record, disclose, discuss, or share any such information with third parties or on social media. All information encountered during these activities must be treated as private and confidential.
- _____ Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the program, notification to the participant's organization, and potential legal action when privacy or confidentiality rights are violated.

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

As consideration for being permitted to participate in Leadership Hardin County, I hereby, to the fullest extent permitted by law, release, waive, and hold harmless the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Hardin County, any affiliated or sponsoring organizations, and each of their respective directors, officers, employees, volunteers, agents, contractors, presenters, and representatives from and against any and all claims, demands, causes of action, damages, losses, liabilities, costs, or expenses arising out of or related to my participation in program activities, events, or related travel, except to the extent caused by gross negligence, willful misconduct, or where otherwise prohibited by law.

APPLICANT'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have carefully read and understand the full requirements, policies, expectations, and conditions of participation in Leadership Hardin County, including the liability release section, and I agree to abide by and be bound by its terms.

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

DATE

If your employer will pay tuition and/or support time away from work for participation, an employer or authorized representative should sign below.

EMPLOYER / AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

DATE

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Submit completed materials to melanie@hardinchamber.com or the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce office.

- Completed application form**
- 3 Reference Letters**
- Applicant signature completed**
- Employer signature completed if applicable**

PROGRAM CONTACT

Hardin County Chamber of Commerce

Attention: Melanie Parker

111 West Dixie, Elizabethtown, Kentucky 42701

Telephone: 270-765-4334

www.hardinchamber.com

Thank you for your interest in Leadership Hardin County. It is truly an honor to be part of a program that brings together individuals who care deeply about our community and want to make a meaningful difference. As Chairperson, I appreciate your willingness to invest your time, energy, and heart into this experience. Leadership is not just about personal growth; it is about building relationships, serving others, and working together to create a stronger future for Hardin County. I am grateful for your interest in this journey and look forward to the impact you can make through this program.

Anthony Conder

Chairperson, Leadership Hardin County

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HCCC Hardin
County
Chamber of
Commerce

Ready to Lead Hardin County?

Submit completed materials to contact above, or to the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce office: 111 West Dixie Avenue • Elizabethtown, KY 42701