



LEADERSHIP TAHLEQUAH

**PROGRAM
HANDBOOK
2026-2027**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Help us set the stage for a great Leadership Tahlequah Program by knowing what to expect in the coming year.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Check your schedule, we've planned out all the sessions so you can know ahead of time.

APPLICATION

This form is attached for your convenience. You can also find it on our website.

PARTICIPANT/EMPLOYER COMMITMENT FORM

This form is attached for your convenience. You can also find it on our website.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Leaders are not born; they are developed. We must ensure the success of our community by cultivating talented individuals who will emerge and lead us into the future. There is no better training ground for our future leaders than Leadership Tahlequah.

The keys to the future of Tahlequah are knowledgeable and skilled leaders who have an awareness and understanding of all facets of our community; including government, business, education, recreation, utilities, infrastructure, housing, health care, social services, and more.

OUR PURPOSE

Establish a leadership foundation for the future of our area.

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will identify their strengths and passions that can be leveraged to serve their community.
- Participants will understand the strengths, needs, and inter-connected systems that provide opportunities within our community.
- Participants will be able to apply and build their social networks and connections.
- Participants will emerge as board-ready leaders who are equipped to step into open opportunities.
- Participants will be prepared to share their experience, bringing knowledge back to their employers and teammates.

CURRICULUM

The program consists of seven day-long sessions, which last from October through June. Additional sessions include an Opening Reception, a two-day Retreat, an overnight OKC trip, and a Graduation Celebration. Session topics include: Personal Leadership, Education, Economy, Healthcare, City and County Government, State Government, and Quality of Life.

TIME COMMITMENT

This program requires a significant time commitment; we ask that you are aware and have full support before application submission. Participants are highly encouraged to attend every session, however, we understand that some situations are out of the participant's control. We do ask that you inform a program director of an absence as soon as the situation permits. The absence of more than 2 sessions will be subject to discussion with the Leadership Tahlequah directors, the participant, and their employer to determine graduation status. Class officers are selected and voted upon by the class members. Each role as an officer is expected to carry out duties outside of allocated class time as well, as these roles are vital to the success of the class project.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Be 21 years of age or older
- Have at least 2 years of work experience
- Live and/or work in Cherokee County
- Have an interest and passion to serve the Cherokee County region
- Be willing to devote the required time toward the Leadership Tahlequah program, project and all its requirements
- Have the intention to remain in or support Cherokee County in the immediate future
- Display community and/or civic leadership through activities or desire to become more involved
- Demonstrate leadership skills and abilities in current job
- Demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and be proactive to community concerns
- Work to contribute to Leadership Tahlequah in terms of participation & connecting with peers
- Have the required financial and time commitment of their employer

PARTICIPATION SELECTION

Each year, the number of applications received exceeds the number of available slots. The Leadership Tahlequah program gives careful consideration in choosing a diverse class that best represents Tahlequah and Cherokee County. Selected participants will vary in aspects of industry, education, community involvement, interests, ethnic and minority groups. Participants will be selected based upon information provided in the application, resume, and interview process.

Applicants approaching or currently in a decision-making position in their organization, individuals who have the potential for advancement into top leadership roles within their organization, and/or individuals who play a significant role in the future of Tahlequah should apply.

TUITION

Tuition covers all sessions, name tags, class materials, speaker and instructor fees, field trips, overnight lodging, meals, refreshments, tours, and graduation. Tuition may be paid by the employer or applicant. As part of the program, class members will participate in an overnight trip to Oklahoma City. Standard tuition includes hotel accommodations based on double occupancy, with participants sharing a room with another class member. If you prefer a private hotel room, we are happy to accommodate that request for an additional fee. The private room rate will be determined based on the hotel's current pricing and will be communicated prior to the trip. Please indicate your lodging preference on your application. Tuition will be invoiced, pending acceptance into the Leadership Tahlequah program.

**TUITION MUST BE PAID IN FULL BY
OCTOBER 1, 2026.**

PROGRAM RULES

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

- If any class member is unable to attend a session, notification must be made 48 hours in advance by contacting the program coordinator at the Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce (Cami Highers at 918-456-3742 or cami@tahlequahchamber.com).
- We understand there are special circumstances that may happen, so please know that we will work with you if needed; however, we encourage you to maintain your attendance record. It is important for you and the others in the program. We do want you to graduate and move forward as a leader of Tahlequah!
- Attendance is enforced in all circumstances by the Leadership Steering Committee. The committee's decision regarding compliance with attendance policies will be final.

ATTIRE

- Some class tours will require more casual attire due to tours and activities. Class members will be notified in advance as to the dress attire for each session.
- A name tag will be provided for each class member and should always be worn during the session.

CLASS MATERIALS/ COMMUNICATION

- A Facebook account will be set up for the current Leadership Tahlequah class.
- You are encouraged to take photos and post on the page and share information on the Leadership program.

CONDUCT

- Appropriate conduct befitting the integrity of the Leadership Tahlequah program is required at all meetings.

LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

- To learn more about involvement in the community, a class member will be required to attend a minimum of two (2) board of directors/council/commission meetings, such as Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce, Tahlequah Main Street Association, Tahlequah City Council, Cherokee County Commission, Cherokee Nation Tribal Council Meeting, School Board or other non-profit organizations.

LEADERSHIP PROJECT

- Each Leadership Tahlequah class is required to create a project that makes an impact in the community. More information will be provided during the Opening Session.
- Participation in the preparation and presentation of group projects is required of all class members, without exception.
- Time may be allotted during some monthly sessions for work on the project and other class-related activities; however, the class may decide more time outside of class sessions will be needed for planning and execution of the chosen project.

SESSION SCHEDULE

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Aug 20..... | Applications Deadline; Interviews to Begin |
| Sept 15..... | Applicants Notified of Acceptance |
| Sept 22..... | Opening Session – Meet & Greet |
| Oct 5-6..... | Personal Leadership Retreat |
| Nov 5..... | Education Day |
| Dec 10..... | City/County Government Day |
| Jan 14..... | Healthcare Day |
| Feb 11..... | Team Leadership/Higher Education |
| Mar 1-2..... | Overnight OKC Legislative Day |
| Apr 8 or 15 | Cherokee Nation Day |
| May 13..... | Economic Development Day |
| June 10..... | History Day/Tourism Day |
| June 17... .. | Closing Ceremony – Graduation |

**WHILE WE TRY TO KEEP SESSIONS
CONSISTENT - SESSIONS ARE
SUBJECT TO CHANGE DEPENDING
ON UNFORESEEN PLANNING
CONFLICTS.**

LEADERSHIP CLASS

APPLICATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Full name: _____ Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Business / Employer Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Work Phone: _____

Preferred Method of Contact: Email Phone Text | Home/Business

Allergies: _____

How long have you worked for your current employer? _____

One interesting fact about yourself: _____

ACHIEVEMENTS

Please list any extracurricular activities, leadership positions held, special honors, and awards received.

What do you consider to be your highest career achievement to date?

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

Please list your volunteer work; including any community, civic, religious, political, social, athletic, business/professional or other activities you were involved in your main role in each.

Organization

Position/Role

How much time each month do you commit to volunteer work? _____

What areas of interest do you have for current or future volunteer work?

GENERAL INFORMATION

What do you feel are the top three issues facing Tahlequah? Please explain and list any ideas you have for resolving these issues.

TUITION SELECTION:

Please select your lodging preference and program rate:

Standard Program Rate: \$595 – Includes double-occupancy hotel accommodations for Oklahoma City trip.

Private Room Rate: \$750 – I would like to reserve a private hotel room and understand that an additional fee will apply.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

EMPLOYER UNDERSTANDING AND CONSENT

This candidate has my full support to participate in the 2026-2027 Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce - Leadership Tahlequah Class 29. I am aware of the time commitment involved in his/her effective participation, as well as the financial obligation. (Should be signed by the owner or CEO, if other than the applicant.)

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Office Use Only

Date Received: _____

Check #: _____

Amount: _____