



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Hilton Head Island Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program?

The Leadership program is designed for Lowcountry professionals to immerse into all aspects of the area's economic sectors, history, politics and meet its local leaders. The program runs from August, 2021 to June, 2022.

How much does it cost to take part in the Leadership Program, and what's included?

The cost of the program is \$1150.00, and covers your meals, any lodging for overnight trips and program materials.

When can I apply?

The online applications for the Class of 2022 opened in mid-March. You have until Wednesday, May 19th to complete the application. The selection committee will hold interviews in June and make the selection in July. You will be notified if you are selected, and then begin your experience with a required Orientation in August.

How do you anticipate COVID will affect the program for the Class of 2022.

Good question. The board is committed to adhering to all safety guidance provided on the local, state and federal levels. We will be flexible at every part of the program, whether in person, or over zoom, to provide the safest and most interactive learning environment. We will provide you with advance notice of any changes to the program, as early as possible.

Who is selected to be a part of the Leadership Program?

This is a competitive application and interview process, and not everyone who applies is accepted. The application, essays and references are one part of your score. The other score is from an in-person (or virtual, for COVID safety) interview with members of the Leadership board. The class is usually fewer than 30 individuals with varying backgrounds, ages and skills sets.

How much time is required to participate in the program?

The program has pre-set calendar of class days you are able to review prior to applying for the program. They include a full-day, required Orientation in August, and a Friday-Saturday overnight retreat in September that is also required. The other required class day is at the end of the program in May. All

other class days are not required to attend, but only two absences are allowed from them. Missing any part of the class days, from start to finish, unless approved, constitutes an absence.

(We advise if you are starting a new job, a new family, or have inordinate demands on your time, perhaps wait to apply until next year.)

Who is eligible to apply for the program?

You must have lived or worked in the area for 1 year. Some exceptions are made by the board.

Are there scholarships or financial assistance available for the program?

If you are accepted into the program, you can ask for a scholarship application, to access funds, to pay the program fee. There are a limited number of scholarships. We can also work out a payment plan over the course of your class year. We do not want money, or the issue of funding, to keep you from being in the program. All scholarship requests are kept confidential.

Other than the class days, what time commitment or activities will I be required to do?

The program has a requirement to complete Community Enrichment Activities (CEA's) that contribute to your personal and professional growth. Examples of these hours include attending a political meeting at town hall, performing community service, touring or visiting a local museum or attraction, or attending a meeting or group that is a new experience.

The program also requires you complete a class project with your classmates. Ideas for the project are narrowed down during your retreat weekend, and you have until your final class day to plan, fundraise, design and execute the plan. Previous class projects include building playgrounds, historic signage and educational initiatives.

When are the class days and what happens during the class experiences?

The class days are held each month, August, 2021-May, 2022. A complete list of class days is posted in advance of you making application. The class days are each *themed* to focus on a difference aspect of the area. Each class day is during work hours (typically 8-5pm) at locations in/around Beaufort County. The class agenda is distributed at least a week beforehand, so you know the required dress, meeting location, times and speakers.

I have food allergies or mobility limitations. Are there adaptive options for me?

Absolutely. We will work with any member of the class to accommodate your physical needs. We only ask you make us aware of them in advance.

I have previous leadership training and hold a leadership position at my work. Is this program right for me?

Despite previous training, we find individuals at all levels of professional and personal development are challenged in the program. Whether it's the interaction within small group dynamics, industry leaders,

or visiting a new location, even the seasoned leader has a good experience. If you have a specific desired outcome from the program, we ask you let us know in advance.

What is the Board of Regents?

The Leadership Program has a volunteer board of directors, or Regents, who oversee the program class days, financials and ensure the program operates under the established by-laws. The board is made up of previous graduates, or alumni, of the program who are deeply committed to the program's success.

How is the relationship between the Chamber and the Leadership Program?

The Leadership Program is a program of the Hilton Head Island Bluffton Chamber of Commerce. It provides a liaison to the program to work with the Board of Regents to ensure the chamber's mission and vision are carried out through the program by growing leaders that contribute to the area's economic success and community collaboration.