



For small business owners navigating the intricate landscape of entrepreneurship, the Premier Program at Leadership Howard County offers a transformative opportunity. Here is a persuasive argument for why a small business owner should consider investing in this premier leadership development program:

1. Networking Opportunities within the Local Community:

Participating in the Premier Program offers exclusive networking opportunities within the local community. Connect with fellow entrepreneurs, community leaders, and influential figures. Build relationships that extend beyond industry boundaries, fostering collaborations, partnerships, and a robust professional network.

2. Enhancing Brand Reputation through Community Engagement:

The program places a strong emphasis on community engagement—an integral part of successful small business leadership. Actively participating in local initiatives and philanthropy associates your business with ethical practices and corporate responsibility, enhancing its reputation within the community and attracting customers who value socially responsible businesses.

3. Measurable Impact on Business Outcomes:

The Premier Program's impact is not just theoretical—it is measurable. Previous participants have reported improvements in business outcomes, including increased customer satisfaction, streamlined operations, and improved team productivity. These outcomes directly contribute to the success and sustainability of small businesses in a competitive market.

4. Future-Proofing Business Leadership:

In an era of rapid technological advancements and evolving consumer preferences, adaptability and innovative thinking are essential. The Premier Program ensures that small business owners are equipped with the leadership skills necessary to navigate future challenges successfully. Investing in leadership development is an investment in the resilience and sustainability of your small business

5. A Wise Investment for Sustainable Growth:

Consider the Premier Program as an investment in the long-term growth and success of your small business. The knowledge and skills acquired by participants contribute not only to short-term profitability but also position the business for sustained growth and leadership in the local small business community.

Conclusion:

For a small business owner seeking not just survival but to thrive and lead with impact, the Premier Program at Leadership Howard County is a strategic investment. It is more than a leadership development program; it is an opportunity to elevate business leadership, foster community connections, and create a positive impact on the trajectory of your small business.

Invest in leadership, invest in growth, and position your small business as a leader in the local community. The Premier Program is not just an expense; it is a strategic investment in the continued success of your small business and its positive influence on customers and the broader business landscape.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the program content?

The core program for Leadership Howard County is its ten-month leadership development program designed with a focus on civic engagement, adaptive leadership, and collaborative problem-solving. Through site visits, presentations, design thinking activities, and informal discussions, participants learn how major decisions are made, who makes them and ways they can engage in systems change in their home community. The program also utilizes a team-building overnight retreat that allows participants to examine the tenets of leadership.

The program covers topics such as:

- Human services
- Housing and Transportation
- Local and State Government
- Healthcare
- Human services
- Education/Lifelong Learning
- Business and economic development
- Public safety
- Quality of life: cultural and recreational opportunities

Participants also commit to a “Community Impact Project,” which is a project identified by a host organization – typically a nonprofit organization or government entity – addressing an organizational challenge or strategic issue. Participants work in teams on a consultant basis, performing research and proposing creative, sustainable solutions. This activity is designed to be a beneficial experience not only for the organization but for our participants as well, helping them gain a better understanding of community needs and a deeper appreciation for community involvement.

What is the long-term value of completing the program?

With a network of more than 1,500 graduates, our members continue to stay connected to the issues in the community and to each other for personal and professional support. LHC conducts many regular meetings and forums for graduates and other members of the community to meet and learn about issues or resources in the community. These include quarterly breakfasts and luncheons with guest speakers and our annual Big Event fundraiser, which features a keynote speaker with an inspiring message about meeting the challenges of community leadership.

Graduates commit to using their experience for the long-term benefit of our community. They have learned about community issues, developed their leadership skills and the knowledge of how to tap into vital resources. With this knowledge, many graduates serve on nonprofit and community boards and committees where their interests, talents and resources can best be used.

What is the time commitment?

This is a 10-month program, running from September to June.

The kick-off orientation meeting is held early to mid-September following Labor Day. In addition, a mandatory, two-day overnight retreat is held at the end of September. All monthly day-long sessions, *usually held* on the third Tuesday of the month, will be published in early spring.

Additional Commitments

Applicants must have the full support (financial and time commitment) of the organization or corporation they represent. They must also commit to the overnight retreat and monthly sessions.

How do I apply to Leadership Howard County Premier?

Starting in January through May 17, 2024, individuals may apply online by visiting the website:

www.leadershiphc.org, and going to the Programs link, and clicking on Apply.

A non-refundable application fee of \$75 is required.

How many participants are selected for each class year?

Each year, approximately 40 to 50 individuals are selected to participate in the program. The Selection Committee reviews applications and selects participants, based upon the merits of the written application and a personal interview.

How much is tuition?

Tuition for the 2025 Class will be \$6,400 – the cost includes the overnight retreat, program materials, program transportation, meals during the monthly sessions, and a ticket for the annual graduation dinner held in June.

Is tuition assistance available?

Tuition assistance is available to those in need (nonprofits, faith-based organizations, community activists, small businesses). We can typically provide up to one third to one half of the tuition cost. A request must be submitted with the application and is available online or by calling the office at 410-730-4474. Payment plans are also available. While we ask that individuals have the financial support of the organization or business they represent, we also encourage nonprofits and individuals with a sincere interest to apply, as community partnerships may also be able to offer additional financial support.