



2026 Application

Transforming Leaders. Strengthening Communities.

Join a vibrant community of aging services professionals as the LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy once again welcomes emerging leaders from Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey and Rhode Island. Now entering our second year of regional collaboration, the enhanced Leadership Academy offers a year of dynamic growth, connection, and transformative leadership development designed to elevate your impact and expand your potential.

2026 LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy

The *LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy* is a regionally based leadership program that fosters and encourages leadership development within the LeadingAge Connecticut, LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware and LeadingAge Rhode Island member organizations.

Now in its second year of regional collaboration, LeadingAge Connecticut remains committed to this forward-thinking leadership program to ensure that we are developing leaders who will carry on the mission of expanding the possibilities for aging. Modeled after the national LeadingAge Leadership Academy program, the LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy provides a year-long transformational leadership development experience that is both accessible and affordable. We are proud to partner once again with LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware and LeadingAge Rhode Island to extend this experience to their memberships.

Transformational leadership is an inspiring and visionary leadership approach that creates significant change in the lives of people and organizations through strong relationships. Participants enrolled in the academy will be considered “fellows” and they will engage in a year-long leadership program that will include four two-day overnight learning experiences in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Jersey which will be scheduled throughout 2026.

Mission:

The LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy provides aging services professionals with leadership development experiences that will transform them, the organizations they serve and the field of aging.

Values:

- **Accountability:** Acknowledging your personal responsibility to yourself, your sponsor and peers by being present and participating in each session.
- **Authenticity:** Exploring our own leadership voices, based on personal values and self-discovery.
- **Stewardship:** Expecting that each of us will share our time and talent to move the field forward in a progressive and ethical direction.
- **Person-Centeredness:** Honoring the unique gifts of ourselves and others.
- **Integrity:** Holding ourselves, our colleagues and our organizations to a high standard of honesty, excellence and accountability.
- **Respect:** Demonstrating a willingness to hear all perspectives and consider opposing viewpoints.
- **Engagement:** Cultivating a passion for life-long learning, collaboration and being fully present.

Connecticut Leadership Academy Facilitators

The Leadership Academy will be led by a team of facilitators whom are all alumni of the Leadership Academy: LeaAnn Blanchard, Executive Director, The Orchards at Southington; Michelle Pandolfi, Vice President, Whitney Center/ Executive Director, Thrive at Home; and Heather Stanton, Vice President of Resident Services and Community Life, Duncaster.

Are You the Right Candidate for the Leadership Academy?

The program is available to anyone who works for a LeadingAge Connecticut, LeadingAge New Jersey & Delaware or LeadingAge Rhode Island member, or works for a LeadingAge Connecticut Diamond or Platinum Partner organization. It is far more important for a candidate to demonstrate leadership potential within their organization than it is for them to carry a specific job title.

Once enrolled in the program, the fellow **must commit to attending all four two-day sessions and are highly encouraged/expected to attend all overnights** as it contributes to the relationship building and support of fellows.

Fellows should plan on dedicating ten to fifteen hours a month working on Leadership Academy program activities and readings and be available for regular team communication.

If at any time a fellow's employment status changes and they are no longer employed by the supporting organization or they fail to meet any of the program's eligibility criteria, continued participation in the Leadership Academy is subject to review by LeadingAge Connecticut.

LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy Schedule

Participating fellows will engage in four two-day face-to-face customized learning experiences that will include visits to Connecticut, New Jersey, and Rhode Island member communities, conversations with aging services leaders and self exploration of leadership styles through exercises and readings.

The selected dates for the 2026 LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy are as follows:

Session 1: January 15 and 16

Session 2: March 26 and 27

Session 3: June 4 and 5

Session 4: September 24 and 25

***Locations will be confirmed once fellow has received their acceptance letter.**

We have updated the format this year to include an overnight stay for all four sessions and the cost for lodging is covered by this year's tuition. This change will provide a deeper, more immersive experience that emphasizes the importance of relationship building, emotional intelligence, advocacy for our organizations and the people they serve, forging partnerships beyond our own communities, and learning from the best practices of others.

Tuition and Expenses

Each fellow's employer is responsible for a **\$5,000 non-refundable** tuition payment and any related expenses, including travel to the four two-day sessions. New this year, all sessions will include one overnight hotel stay at each session with lodging and expenses included in this year's tuition.

LeadingAge Connecticut will provide each fellow with all required reading materials as well as complimentary registration to the 2026 LeadingAge Connecticut EXPO and LeadingAge Connecticut Annual Meeting. These dates are **May 20, 2026 and October 13, 2026**.

Application Timeline

Completed applications must be submitted no later than **November 20, 2025**. Applications that fail to meet all guidelines or are incomplete will not be considered for review. Applicants will receive notification of acceptance into the program by early-December.

The Application Evaluation Process

All application submissions will be carefully reviewed to ultimately assemble a diverse class of fellows, including life experience, leadership roles, work experience, geography, type of organization, as well as other unique characteristics.

The application review will evaluate applications using the following criteria:

- How well defined, insightful and introspective is the leadership essay?
- Does the applicant demonstrate a personal commitment to the field of aging services?

Demand for the LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy is high and admission can be competitive. Submitting an application does not guarantee acceptance, but all applicants are carefully considered to ensure a strong cohort of future leaders.

Leadership Academy FAQ

How do the four two-day sessions relate to the overall curriculum and goals of the program?

The Academy's in-person sessions feature a diverse mix of engaging activities and learning opportunities. Each session is designed to help fellows build a comprehensive "toolbox" of leadership skills, self-awareness, and professional insight.

How many people are in a class?

Class size varies from year to year, but we intentionally keep it small to foster a more personal and connected learning environment. Past classes have ranged from 12 to 21 fellows.

Outside of the four sessions, how much time should I plan to carve out of my week?

Depending on your team's schedule, fellows should plan to dedicate 30 minutes to an hour each week for readings and team calls.

Do we have to attend all of the sessions? What if we have to miss one or two?

Attendance at all four sessions is a key part of the commitment. We understand, however, that life and work can sometimes conflict. While fellows are expected to attend every session unless an emergency arises, the facilitator team and LeadingAge Connecticut will review situations on a case-by-case basis.

Are overnight stays required for the sessions? Why?

Yes, overnight stays are now part of all four two-day sessions. Previously, only two sessions included overnight accommodations, but we made the change to all four sessions to strengthen relationships among fellows and provide more time for meaningful connection, reflection, and collaboration. Accommodation costs for lodging are included in the tuition.

What is the time commitment for fellows?

Fellows should plan to devote approximately 10 to 15 hours per month to Leadership Academy activities and readings, along with regular team communication. They must also commit to attending all four two-day sessions, all of which will include overnight stays.

What networking and collaboration opportunities can fellows expect as part of the program?

Fellows will engage in ongoing collaboration with their team and program coach and will have opportunities to connect with leaders across the field at LeadingAge Connecticut events throughout the year. After graduation, many alumni continue their growth through the Leadership Academy Alumni Group.

What are the sessions like?

The in-person sessions include a mix of group exercises, facilitator-led discussions, and time for personal reflection and contemplation, all designed to inspire connection, insight, and growth.

Can fellows from the same organization apply and participate together?

Yes. Several organizations have sponsored more than one fellow in previous years, and participants have found it valuable to go through the program alongside a colleague. This year, however, participation will be limited to no more than two fellows per organization site.

Have More Questions? Join our Q&A Lunch and Learn Sessions

Join us for a 30-minute informational session where you can learn more about the program, connect with alumni, and ask questions directly to the 2026 Facilitator Team!

- Learn about the Leadership Academy program and its benefits
- Hear from past alumni about their experiences and growth
- Get your questions answered by the 2026 Facilitator Team
- Meet like-minded individuals passionate about leadership and personal development

Sessions:

Session 1: Friday, October 31 at Noon

Session 2: Friday, November 7 at Noon

Session 3: Friday, November 14 at Noon

2026 LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy

Application Requirements

Please submit the following information along with your completed application. We are not able to review incomplete applications.

- ***A resume or brief description of your work experience, educational background and other pertinent information.*** Please limit your submission to no more than two pages.
- ***A brief essay on the following topic: Describe your personal commitment to the field of aging services, share your journey into the field and illustrate your vision for the future of aging services.*** Feel free to refer to a significant personal or professional achievement, your specific role in attaining that achievement and/or the impact it had on you or your organization. Please express how this program might enhance your leadership qualities and/or the abilities you already possess. Please make sure you provide enough information to give the selection committee insight into your experience and desire to be part of this program, but limit your essay to no more than 750 words.
- ***One professional letter of reference.*** We suggest approaching your selected reference early in the process to ensure they are completed prior to the application deadline.

Questions and Additional Information

For additional information regarding the LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy or for questions regarding the application process, please contact Allison Anka at LeadingAge Connecticut at aanka@leadingagect.org or at our new academy email — leadershipacademy@leadingagect.org.

Please return completed applications by **November 20, 2025** to:

LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy
110 Barnes Road
Wallingford, CT 06492

Or return via email to LeadingAge Connecticut, leadershipacademy@leadingagect.org.

LeadingAge Connecticut Leadership Academy Application

Name : _____

Employer : _____

Position / Title : _____

Business Mailing Address : _____

City : _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Business Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Business Email Address: _____

Preferred Email Address if other than Business: _____

Dietary Restrictions: _____ Accommodations: _____

If you were to be selected to attend the 2026 class, how would you prefer to receive your reading material? Please select one of the following.

Hard Copy: _____ Audio Book: _____

Sponsoring Organization's Commitment

If selected, the fellow's sponsoring organization agrees to:

- Provide non-refundable tuition and travel costs associated with the program.
- Allow adequate time for the completion of assignments that will enhance the understanding and application of the content areas of each session.
- Allow the fellow time to connect with his or her coach and actively participate in learning activities, including the four two-day overnight learning sessions.

Sponsor's Signature: _____

Printed Sponsor's name and title: _____

Sponsor's Email Address: _____

Applicant's Commitment

If selected, the fellow commits to:

- Attend and actively participate in each of the four two-day learning sessions.
- Complete assignments to enhance the understanding and application of the content areas.
- Actively participate in the on-line community forum and monthly conference calls with your team and assigned coach.
- Connect monthly with your coach to discuss assignments and additional professional development opportunities.

Applicant's Signature: _____