



Russellville
**REGIONAL LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY**

Class 41

The Challenge

Leaders are not born; they are developed through learning and experience. Unfortunately, many people do not realize this and take for granted the future of our area by assuming that leadership talent will naturally emerge when needed. There is no better program to serve as the training ground for our future leaders than Russellville Regional Leadership Academy. The keys to the River Valley's future 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.

The Purpose

Russellville Regional Leadership Academy aims to develop a network of competent leaders for present and future community needs. To meet this goal, RRLA seeks to:

- Identify and motivate individuals with leadership potential;
- Acquaint them with community needs, challenges and opportunities;
- Offer a forum of exchange on methods for dealing with community issues;
- Challenge potential leaders to become involved with local issues and the decision-making process.

Accomplishing our Objectives

Russellville Regional Leadership Academy seeks to develop community leaders by training and informing participants on a wide array of local public policy issues and concerns. In-depth training sessions focus on these issues, exploring their background, origin and present day-status. The program covers a full slate of topics including government, the area's economy, education, social services and much more. The sessions combine lectures, tours, dialogue and interaction between speakers and participants.

Curriculum

The curriculum may vary slightly from year to year, but a typical year's sessions are as follows:

- Class Luncheon
- Orientation/Retreat
- Federal/County Government
- Economic Development

- Health and Wellness
- City Government
- Education
- State Government
- Emergency Services
- Tourism & Hospitality
- Graduation

Criteria for Selection

- Strongly professed interest and commitment to serve the River Valley area beyond the training period.
- Willingness to devote time to Russellville Regional Leadership Academy in terms of attendance and field projects during the program.
- An occupational commitment to remain in the Russellville Region or little likelihood of transfer in the immediate future.
- Community and/or civic service leadership as evidenced by the breadth and level of involvement in non-employment-related volunteer activities within the Russellville Region or demonstration of interest in becoming more involved.
- Demonstration of leadership skills and abilities on the job.
- Demonstration of strong interpersonal skills and a tendency to be proactive on issues of concern to the community.
- Ability to make a substantive contribution to the program, both in terms of issues and projects, as well as networking with peers.
- Financial and time commitment of applicant's employer or sponsoring organization for applicant to participate in Russellville Regional Leadership Academy.
- Commitment to RRLA (simultaneous or concurring participation in other local, regional, or state leadership programs is not allowed.)
- Residence or employment in the River Valley for a minimum of one year.

Background

Russellville Regional Leadership Academy has been a program of the Russellville Area Chamber of Commerce since 1986. Since it began, Russellville Regional Leadership Academy has had over 600 graduates, many of which have become prominent leaders in the River Valley.

Participant Selection

An anonymous selection committee will give careful attention to choosing a class that represents a cross-section of the community and reflects its diversity with a balanced gender, race, socio-economic, and geographic representation that closely parallels the demographics of the area. Participants will be active in business, education, government, nonprofit, and community-based organizations.

Tuition

The tuition fee for each participant selected is \$750 and is payable in full prior to the class announcement.

Time Commitment

The Russellville Regional Leadership Academy program consists of ten-full day sessions plus an out-of-town retreat. Sessions are usually held September through May, but a complete calendar will be provided to each participant prior to their acceptance. Attendance at the retreat prior to the first session is **required**. Some work sessions regarding a class project will be conducted by the class members and will require planning

time over and above scheduled class time. Additional projects may be assigned. Program participants are expected to attend each monthly session. While emergencies do arise, any participant missing more than fourteen (14) hours of scheduled events, for whatever reason, shall be automatically dropped from the program and no portion of the tuition will be refunded. Upon missing eight (8) hours, the participant will be reminded of his/her attendance status. Upon missing twelve (10) hours, the participant's employer will be notified of the attendance status.

708 West Main Street | 479.968.2530

Alumni Association

Upon completion of the Russellville Regional Leadership Academy program, participants will automatically become a member of the organization's alumni association.

Application Instructions

Please complete each section fully. Limit answers to the space available. Application must be signed by both the applicant and employer/sponsor and returned to the Russellville Chamber of Commerce.

Application should contain a recent, high quality color head shot in a digital format. The photo may accompany the application or it may be sent separately by e-mail. Two letters of recommendation are required - one from an employer or co-worker and one from a community source who can speak to applicant's ability to meet selection criteria. Letters may accompany the application or may be sent separately, and should be sent to: Angela Bonds, Russellville Regional Leadership Academy, 708 West Main, Russellville, AR 72801 or abonds@russellvillechamber.com. Applications and reference letters are the property of the Russellville Chamber of Commerce and will remain confidential. If you have any questions, please contact Angela Bonds at 479-968-2530. **Deadline to apply is September 9, 2026**

Please complete the following: (please print)

Applicant's Name

Employer/Sponsor Name

Reference Letters will be sent by:

1.

2.

russellvillechamber.com

Confidential Application

Class 41

I. Personal Data

Last_____First_____Middle_____

Preferred on Name Tag:_____

Male_____Female_____

Work Title_____

Employer_____

Employer Address_____

City_____State____Zip_____

Phones (W) _____ (C) _____ Email_____

Emergency Contact (name and phone) _____

Have you participated in Leadership programs in other cities? Y__N__

If yes, please list cities and year(s)?

Home Address_____

City_____State____Zip_____

Place of Birth_____ Years residence in the River Valley _____

Spouse's Name if Applicable_____

Children's Names and Ages if Applicable

Confidential Application

Class 41

I. Personal Data

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I. Personal Data

Leisure Activities

One unusual or “fun” fact about yourself

II. Background

- Attach the following information:
- Employment (since graduation from high school or college through current)
- Business/ Professional Affiliations (include professional/trade associations, civic clubs or other professional activities)
- Civic/Community/Volunteer Affiliation (may include civic, religious, political, government, social, athletic or other activities)
- Special Awards or Honors (include career or civic/community awards)
- Education

III. Community Involvement

Please answer the following questions, using no more than two sheets.

- What leadership qualities do you possess and how have you used them?
- What do you believe are the two most significant issues or problems facing the River Valley at this time?
- What action would you suggest to address one of the issues or problems?
- Drawing from your life experiences, describe an example of your volunteerism.

Confidential Application

Class 41

I. Personal Data

- Why do you want to participate in RRLA and what do you expect to gain?

Confidential Application Class 41

IV. Participant Commitment

To graduate from Russellville Regional Leadership Academy, a participant is expected to attend all sessions, including the following:

- Class Announcement and Reception: Mid-September
- Orientation Retreat: Late September
- At least nine sessions—one each month from November through June, generally on Thursday with some exceptions.
- A trip to Little Rock for State Government Day
- Graduation Luncheon
- Additional enhancement sessions/projects
- A complete calendar will be provided prior to the new class announcement.
- Also see Time Commitment on Page 2

Deadline to apply is September 9, 2026

I understand the purposes of the Russellville Regional Leadership Academy program and, if selected, I will devote the time and resources necessary to complete the program. I understand that by missing the retreat or by missing any more than 16 hours of class time, for whatever reason, I will be asked to withdraw from the program and no portion of the tuition will be refunded. I further agree to abide by the confidentiality policies of the RRLA program. I understand the above commitments and agree to be bound by them in signing this application.

Confidential Application Class 41

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

My company would be interested in being a 2026 session sponsor for \$350.

Yes_____No_____ Maybe_____

Confidential Application Class 41

V. Tuition

If accepted into the Russellville Regional Leadership Academy program, you or your employer (or sponsor if other than employer) will be billed for the tuition fee of \$750. Tuition must be paid in full upon acceptance into the program. Contact Angela Bonds for more information.

Will you or your employer/sponsor pay the entire tuition fee? Y____N____

If not, who will pay your tuition fee:

If your employer is not paying your tuition, you are encouraged to seek a financial sponsor.

VI. Employer/Sponsor Commitment

Russellville Regional Leadership Academy is grateful to the employer/sponsor for your dedication and support of this program. Our goal each year is to select the very best qualified applicants for the program, so we encourage you to sponsor your most deserving associates. At the same time, we strive for diversity in the class in all areas: gender, race, age, industry, and geography. Thank you for your continuing support. To employer/sponsor:

- If applicant changes jobs (and therefore sponsors) between submission of application and completion of selection process, the application could be ruled null and void.
- Selection to this program is based upon the merit of the candidate, not upon any commitment to any employer/sponsor that a guarantee is in place to select their applicant.
- If the employer/sponsor submits more than one candidate in any given year, it is up to the selection committee to determine if any or all of those candidates is selected. The selection committee will attempt to work with the employer/sponsor in these cases, but is not obligated to do so.
- If applicant is selected but vacates sponsor's employment during the class year, the membership in the class goes with the candidate and not the sponsor, with no tuition refund to the sponsor.

This application has the approval of this organization and the applicant has our full support, which includes the time required to participate fully in the Russellville Regional Leadership Academy program. I understand that absence from the retreat or 14+ hours of missed class time will result in the applicant's dismissal from the program with no tuition refund.

Name and Title of Employer/Sponsor and Company/Firm (Please print)

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Signature of Employer/Sponsor