

What is LeadAR?

The purpose of LeadAR is to develop leaders into a network of skilled individuals to strengthen Arkansas communities.

LeadAR will provide you the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of public issues and develop the skills needed to address critical problems facing Arkansas communities. Over the course of this intensive program, you will be immersed in an array of topics including leadership theory, effective communication, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, emerging technology, and complex social and cultural issues. These focus areas are designed to contribute to economic and community growth within our state. Through dynamic workshops, case studies, experiential learning, individualized coaching, group collaboration, and much more, you will acquire tools needed to enhance your leadership skills and heighten your overall personal, community, and organizational success. You become a member of a diverse and vast network of LeadAR alumni and program partners living and working across the state.

Mission of LeadAR

LeadAR will increase participants' knowledge and understanding of economic and social changes affecting our state through practical application of leadership skills and development of expertise to address critical problems facing communities.

Objectives for the LeadAR Program

- Prepare leaders to assume greater leadership responsibilities in their organizations, industries, and communities.
- Provide participants with current information and diverse perspectives to analyze complex cultural and economic issues facing individuals and rural and urban communities.
- Support development of enhanced interpersonal skills for participants to foster a deeper understanding of people – themselves, fellow citizens and their environment.
- Deepen participants' understanding of social, economic and political systems in which people function and how to work within these systems to effectively bring about change.
- Increase participants' awareness and knowledge of emerging issues facing Arkansas' major industries.
- Develop participants' critical thinking and decision-making skills to support optimal public policy development.
- Increase collaboration between rural and urban leadership to solve problems in their organizations, industries, and communities.

What is required to participate in LeadAR?

As a LeadAR participant, you will travel to nine different locations across the state and take part in issue-based discussions, skill building exercises, and hands-on activities with your fellow LeadAR class members. One-on-one and small group discussions, expert panels, and site visits will enhance your learning experience on topics encompassing agriculture, education, health, policy development, natural resources, environment, water, poverty, cultural diversity, and community and economic development.

Between in-person seminars, LeadAR participants will participate in twelve virtual meetings. Virtual meetings will take place on a regularly scheduled date of every month between seminars or tours (National and International). These virtual sessions will include group discussions, skill building, guest speakers, and preparation for the next seminar.

Over the course of the two-year program, you will be required to:

- Attend nine two-day seminars held across the state.
- Participate in 12 virtual meetings.
- Participate in a 7-day National Study Tour to Washington, D.C.
- Attend an 11-day International Study Tour outside the United States.
- Complete individual and group assignments, including a leadership project within your community.

This equates to 42 days of formal program instruction plus some additional time commitment to complete assignments.

National Study Tour

In year one you will travel to Washington D.C. There you will learn how policy is developed from the people who make it happen. You will meet with top-level officials representing government agencies, nonprofits, and industry. You will also meet with your congressional delegation and their top aides to discuss current issues and how they can be addressed.

International Study Tour

In year two you will have the opportunity to travel to a foreign land for approximately 11 days. This study tour offers the opportunity to meet with a broad array of leaders including ambassadors, farmers, government ministers, corporate executives, nonprofit leaders and others. Global issues and dynamics investigated first-hand include politics, economics, trade, commerce, education, culture and agriculture.

Since the program began, LeadAR class members have visited 31 countries. The foreign country selected for the international study tour is determined by the LeadAR Advisory Council with approval by the UA System Division of Agriculture's Associate Vice President for Agriculture-Extension. Travel locations are selected based on current events, learning opportunities, and in-country resources that support the program's educational objectives and safety of the participants.

Note: If you believe that you might have professional or personal obligations that might preclude you from participating in all the program seminars and activities, please reach out to the program director to discuss the specifics of your situation before applying.

Community Leadership Projects

As part of the program completion, you will plan and implement a Community Leadership Project. This will require you to identify a community need, design a project and implement the project aimed at improving the quality of life for their communities. Past projects have included building a local library, applying for grants to secure restrooms for a public park, and the development of the annual Goat Festival located in Perryville, AR.

Tuition and Other Costs

Tuition for LeadAR is \$3,000. This covers seminar expenses, including lodging, most meals, travel expenses while at the seminar (e.g. bus tours), and other seminar expenses (e.g. materials, admission fees). If selected for the program, tuition must be paid in full by October 1, 2020. If you are in need of flexible payment options, contact the program director about setting up a payment plan.

You are welcome to seek tuition support from outside sources. Employers and organizations to which participants are a member often recognize the value of the LeadAR program and may be willing help pay tuition. In the event of financial hardship where full tuition cannot be secured, scholarships are available to assist in payment. Scholarship requests should be made in writing to the program director by your interview date. It is the participant's responsibility to pursue these financial aid options, and it is also the participant's responsibility to ensure that all tuition charges are paid in full.

As a participant you will be responsible for travel to and from each seminar, additional lodging costs not included in the seminar schedule (i.e., one or more nights before the start or after the end of a seminar), some meals (relatively few), tips, incidental expenses at hotels (e.g., room service, movies, etc.), and alcoholic beverages. The program makes every effort to keep these additional, out-of-pocket expenses to a minimum.

The majority of meals for the group will be arranged and paid for by the program. LeadAR staff will make every attempt to accommodate special dietary requirements (e.g., food allergies, diabetic requirements) for group meal functions. However, it may not be possible to accommodate all requests in all locations. If you have special dietary requirements, you may want to bring provisions for these situations.

Attendance Policy

Selection for the LeadAR Program is very competitive. We select individual participants not only because we believe we can help them become better leaders, but also because we believe they have something to contribute to their classmates. When you miss a seminar, you not only diminish your ability to benefit from this program, you also compromise your classmates' opportunity to learn from you.

Furthermore, tuition covers only a fraction of the full cost of participation in LeadAR. Program sponsors and donors have made a significant investment in your leadership potential. These individuals and organizations have a legitimate right to expect a return on that investment, which is jeopardized by a failure to fully participate in the program.

Finally, much of what we do in the program builds upon material covered in earlier seminars. If one seminar is missed, it is often difficult or impossible to “catch up.” You are not just expected to show up at seminars; you are expected to participate fully and productively from start to end of each unless prior arrangements have been made with the program director.

For these reasons and more, we set a very high attendance expectation. We expect ALL of our class members to be at ALL of our seminars and virtual meetings, ALL of the time. That said, we are also realistic enough to realize that as busy adult professionals, sometimes circumstances beyond your control may prevent your full participation. Unexpected health emergencies, a death in the family, a true crisis at work or a previously scheduled, major commitment, may be grounds for an excused absence. (Note that simply being “too busy” is not an acceptable excuse; it is more an indicator of poor planning and time management.)

No matter the cause, *each absence should be brought to the program director’s attention as soon as possible and before the seminar begins.* With the multiple modes of communication available today (telephone, e-mail, text message), there is no excuse for lack of communication in advance with the program director. Each absence will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and excessive absences may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

The LeadAR Advisory Council has established specific guidelines for dealing with absences. As a general rule, absences will be excused for:

- Family Emergencies
- Natural Disasters
- Illness
- Court Subpoena

Other absences will be reviewed by the LeadAR Advisory Council. Penalties and disciplinary actions may be imposed for excessive unexcused absences.

Program Approach and Assignments

LeadAR is an educational program with an array of learning opportunities. As a participant you will be involved in open discussions, facilitation, individual/group presentations, speaker introductions, peer-to-peer coaching, and much more. Along with the seminars, you will be asked to complete assignments on your own and in a group setting. Some of these assignments may include the use of social media, video conferencing, research, and interactions with alumni and other relevant stakeholders. All participants will select, implement, and complete a leadership/community service project in their local area. Other assignments may include:

- *Electronic Media:* Most communication between LeadAR staff and class participants will be via email and phone. The class will use an online platform for

other assignments and group work. All evaluation will be web-based and completed after each seminar. Video conferencing will be utilized throughout the program between seminars to enhance the learning opportunities and maintain participant engagement throughout the two-year program.

- *Reading:* Books and articles will be recommended. These readings are designed to prepare participants for upcoming seminar programs and other homework.
- *Public Speaking/Presentations:* You will gain experience in public speaking. This includes but is not limited to: self-introductions, impromptu speaking, speaker introductions, presiding over sessions, individual/group presentations, and group facilitation.
- *Assessments:* Part of the program involves increasing your self-awareness as a leader. Assessment instruments and other activities will be used to accomplish this.
- *Seminar Evaluation:* You will be expected to complete an anonymous online survey evaluation after each seminar. These serve as very important reflection tools that help to complete the adult learning cycle, and allow all participants to gain from the insights of each of their classmates. They also help us improve the program. Evaluation summaries will be shared with participants and program sponsors.

Participant Expectations

Program educational philosophy: LeadAR has been specifically developed to “grow leaders from the inside out.” This concept is based on leader development research showing that to become a person of influence and an effective leader, one must first understand yourself. LeadAR follows adult learning principles indicating that adults learn best through a continuous cycle of Instruction, Practice, Feedback, and Reflection (Kolb). LeadAR utilizes a transformative learning approach, which transforms the learner from a receiver of information to a learning initiator, information seeker, problem solver, and evaluator. The role of the teacher is that of learning facilitator. LeadAR program content is designed to provide opportunities to develop self-awareness, enhance self-motivation, and hone self-regulation.

Tolerance, respect, and open-mindedness: As a LeadAR participant, you will be exposed to points of view, value systems, allegiances and individual beliefs that may conflict with your own perspectives. We believe that exposure to these differing points of view challenges and helps you learn. We do not expect you to change your beliefs or values, but we do expect that you will consider others’ viewpoints in an environment of tolerance and mutual respect.

Non-partisan, non-political: LeadAR provides an intensive learning opportunity about government, the political process, and lobbying. It is important to remember that we do not lobby. LeadAR does not endorse candidates or take a position on political/legislative issues, and participants should refrain from portraying themselves as representing the program when engaged in such activities. While we hope you will get involved in the political process, our role is to teach you how to be more effective in those roles rather than dictate a specific agenda.

Room Assignments: Historically, class members have shared rooms. However, in accordance with social distancing recommendations from the CDC for the health and safety of participants, class members will not share rooms initially. Class members may share a room with a classmate of the same gender at seminars and study tours except those where spouses/partners are invited in the future. The decision to assign roommates will be well communicated and will take into consideration the health and safety of class members. If roommates are assigned, room assignments will be rotated so that each participant will room with a different classmate throughout the program. Program staff will make the room assignments.

Dress Code: Leaders in general - and representatives of the LeadAR Program in particular - are expected to present themselves in a manner appropriate for the settings in which we operate. Dress codes for specific portions of our program will usually be suggested in seminar agendas.

Participants should use good judgment and dress better than may be required. Our dress code will be listed as one of three categories, with the following descriptions:

1. **Business Attire:** To be worn in formal settings
 - a. Men – suit (or sports coat and slacks), dress shirt, tie, and dress shoes
 - b. Women – business suit or business dress, dress shoes
2. **Business Casual:** The most frequent dress code for seminars
 - a. Men – sport coat or sweater (depending on weather), dress or collared shirt (tie optional), slacks or khakis (no jeans), dress shoes
 - b. Women – Dress slacks, skirt, blouse or dress shirt, dress shoes
3. **Casual:** Infrequent; used only on travel days, free time and some tours
 - a. Men – Casual slacks (or clean, neat jeans), collared shirt, casual shoes
 - b. Women – Casual slacks or skirt (or clean, neat jeans), shirt or blouse, or dress, casual shoes

Program Selection Process

The selection process is intended to attract and secure the most promising, highest quality candidates from Arkansas. As an applicant, you should demonstrate potential to improve leadership skills that will benefit Arkansas communities and contribute to the learning experience of your classmates.

Qualifications

- Applicant must be an Arkansas resident
- Applicant must be at least 25 years old by the first seminar

Other Considerations

- Demonstrate maturity and open-mindedness to take full advantage of what the program offers
- Have full support from family to participate in the program
- Provide written consent from employers (if applicable) to take the required time for the program
- Demonstrate active participation in the local community or organizations
- Demonstrate leadership qualities and potential through community service and

- involvement in agriculture, business, and/or rural enterprise
- Show potential for contribution and impact on the local community and state

Selection Policies

Close relatives (spouses, siblings, or children/parents) will not be selected for the same class. Each class selected will be representative of Arkansas' diverse population and cultures, geography, professional responsibilities and related industries.

All applications will be considered impartially regardless of gender, race, religion, creed, disability, age, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation or national origin.

Up to 30 participants will be selected for the upcoming class. Class representation will be sought from several sectors with the following goals for composition: 25% from agriculture, 25% urban, and 50% rural participants. A selection committee approved by the LeadAR Advisory Council and Extension administration will screen applications, interview, and recommend candidates for the program.

Selection Procedures

The selection process is governed by the LeadAR Advisory Council. The Council's Selection Committee will screen applications, interview candidates, and recommend the class roster for Council approval. Applicant scores are determined by application responses (75 points) and the interview (25 points) for an overall score of 100 points.

- Applicants are required to submit an application online no later than July 20, 2020.
- Applicants will provide four references and the employer consent form to move forward in the selection process.
- The Selection Committee will screen applications and select candidates to interview.
- The program director will contact candidates for interviews.
- Interviews will be conducted August 3 – 21 (when applying, please hold these dates on your schedule)
- All applicants will be notified of Class 19 selection status by September 2020.

For More Information

Contact Dr. Julie Robinson, LeadAR Program Director
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