

LeadingAge™ New York

**IGNITE
YOUR
FLAME**



Leadership Academy

APPLICATION

2026-2027

**“LeadingAge New York’s
IGNITE Leadership Academy
was one of the most beneficial
development programs I’ve
experienced in my professional
career. The content and
networking opportunities have
been invaluable to me.”**

– IGNITE Graduate

WHAT IS IGNITE?

The LeadingAge New York IGNITE Leadership Academy is a professional development program designed to facilitate the development and growth of senior living leaders. Inspired by the LeadingAge National Leadership Academy, this state-focused program was developed with the guidance of LeadingAge New York member leaders and leadership experts. The Academy focuses on internal and external relationship building, the sharing of best practices, and a passion for continuous learning. It is unique from other leadership training in that it is solely for LeadingAge New York provider members, and LeadingAge New York members are an integral part of the experience.

Eligibility

Any individual who works for a LeadingAge New York provider member organization is eligible to apply, irrespective of professional experience, educational attainment, or type or level of position. It is far more important for an applicant to demonstrate deep leadership potential within their organization than it is for them to have a specific job title or tenure in the field. We strive for a cohort that represents the full continuum of LeadingAge New York providers, the various roles within those services, and the various geographic regions across the state. We welcome individuals with varied perspectives, life experiences, and personal and professional skills, in order to enrich the learning experience, fueling leadership development and personal growth for all.





WHY APPLY?

What IGNITE graduates are saying:

The Leadership Academy has provided me great skills and knowledge that I will use in my professional and personal life. It gave me a chance to reflect upon my current leadership skills and find where my true self and style lies. It was an experience I will never forget.

The opportunity to visit innovative communities across New York State was made possible to me by this program. I'm so grateful to my company for the investment and the opportunity. I highly recommend it to anyone looking to grow personally and professionally.

What an awesome and outstanding program. It has challenged me in several ways. I'm learning to be transparent.

The Academy has been truly transformative not only professionally, but personally.

Whether you are a novice or seasoned professional, you will undoubtedly grow or be stretched in new ways.

Leadership Academy has given me the opportunity to develop truly rich relationships that I wasn't expecting. The coaches and leaders have touched my heart, and I'm so grateful!

Truly a heartwarming experience in better understanding yourself, the dynamics of a team, and how to make a difference.

This experience helped me recognize the importance of having diverse points of view and different work styles on a team.

The IGNITE Leadership Academy is an amazing experience! Networking, learning, socializing with peers – it has everything I need to become introspective and a better leader. The instructors are fabulous, and the content is specific to ensuring that each participant gets the most benefit.

The LeadingAge New York IGNITE Leadership Academy provides approximately 30 credits from the National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB) and a total of 60 generic continuing education credits each year.

In this program, you will:

Learn how leaders become more authentic as they clarify their personal values and create their own unique leadership legacy;

Understand what it means to be a visionary leader who embraces culture change and innovation;

Adopt the practices required for networking and partnership building within and outside the organization; and

Manage energy levels for high performance and model behaviors that enhance personal credibility.

MISSION

The LeadingAge New York IGNITE Leadership Academy is a professional development program designed to facilitate the development and growth of senior living leaders in the state.

Vision

To create an engaged group of transformational senior living leaders who are prepared to serve their own organizations and support the goals of LeadingAge New York in an exemplary and innovative fashion.

Values

Collaboration

Generous Listening

Thoughtful Questioning

Responsiveness

Open Communication

COMMITMENT

FACILITATORS:

Mary Wassel, LMSW, LNHA
Chief Operating Officer
Good Shepherd Communities

Diane Darbyshire, LCSW
VP of Advocacy & Public
Policy
LeadingAge New York

COACHES:

Desmond Jackson, MHA,
LNHA
Deputy Executive Health
Director
Monroe Community Hospital

Maria Siano, CPTM
Assistant Director of Human
Resources
The Osborn

David Watkins
Executive Director of Dining
Services
St. John's

Ellen Quinn, BS, SPHR,
SHRMSCP
Certified DiSC Facilitator
VP of Human Resources
LeadingAge New York

Tuition, Costs, and Commitment

Upon acceptance, a \$2,500 tuition payment *(non-refundable and non-transferable) is required from each Fellow's organization. In addition, lodging and travel expenses are also paid by each Fellow's organization (the costs incurred vary depending on the locations of the site visits). Breakfast and lunch are provided during the sessions at no additional cost. Registration for the 2027 LeadingAge New York Spring Leadership Conference and Expo is included as part of the tuition, and *graduation will be held at the conference.*

Fellows are required to attend all in-person sessions, outlined below. Please note: access to cell phones and other communication devices will be limited to break periods. The Fellows should plan on spending up to 10 hours a month working on Academy activities. Fellows will need access to a computer for regular email contacts and virtual meetings with their coaches and team members.

Fellows must remain actively employed by a LeadingAge New York member organization during the Academy program year in order to remain eligible for participation. Each applicant slot is non-transferable, and tuition is non-refundable unless an alternate arrangement is agreed to by all parties.

2026-2027 Learning Schedule and Themes

Participants will engage in four face-to-face learning experiences that include visits to member communities, intimate conversations with aging services leaders, and self-exploration of leadership styles through exercises and readings. **Attendance at each session is required.** The dates for the 2026-2027 LeadingAge New York IGNITE Leadership Academy are as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Theme</u>
September 23 – 24, 2026	Central NY	Discovering Our Authentic Leadership
December 1 – 2, 2026	Capital Region	Collaborating and Partnership Building
February 23 – 24, 2027	Yonkers	Leading Change and Innovation
April 6 – 7, 2027	Rochester	Creating a Mindset of Wellbeing

APPLICATION



Components: All four components must be completed by the deadline for your application to be considered.

1) Complete Application digitally [here](#).

2) Leadership Essay. More information about the essay is provided below. This document should be sent to leadershipacademy@leadingageny.org by the application deadline.

3) Applicants are required to submit the [Applicant and Sponsoring Organization Commitment](#) page signed by their sponsoring organization as part of the application package. The commitment must be signed by the president, CEO, executive director, or administrator (where appropriate) of the applicant's sponsoring organization. If the applicant is the highest-ranking executive officer, the organization's board chair should sign the commitment letter. This document, signed by both aforementioned parties, should be sent to leadershipacademy@leadingageny.org by the application deadline.

4) Letter of Reference: Applicants are required to obtain one professional letter of reference. This letter should be sent to leadershipacademy@leadingageny.org by the application deadline.

Leadership Essay Components

You will submit your essay via email to leadershipacademy@leadingageny.org, with the applicant's name in the subject line. Please make sure your essay provides enough information to give the selection committee insight into your history and desire to be part of this program. Please compose your personal leadership essay addressing each of the below as headers, with your name at the top of the page. Your complete essay, addressing all three questions, should not exceed two typed, single-spaced pages.

- Describe the capacities that you possess that make you an effective leader and the specific ways you have utilized these attributes in your personal and professional life. In doing so, please refer to a significant professional achievement, your specific role in attaining that achievement, and the impact it has had on your organization.
- Describe the perspective and knowledge you hope to acquire from your participation in the LeadingAge New York IGNITE Leadership Academy and how these insights will enable you to become a transformational leader.
- Describe your personal commitment to long term care and aging services and how you envision using your IGNITE experience to enhance aging services within your organization, your community, and at the state level.



APPLICATION

Evaluation Criteria

A committee of LeadingAge New York member leaders will evaluate applications using the following criteria:

- How strongly defined, insightful, and introspective is the leadership essay? How strongly does the applicant demonstrate a personal commitment to the field of long term care and aging services?
- How strongly does the applicant demonstrate dedication to lifelong learning?
- To what extent does the applicant possess the leadership capacity needed to become a transformational leader?

Submission Deadline

To ensure consideration, the deadline to complete and submit the application packet is **5 P.M. on June 5, 2026**. Applications that fail to meet all guidelines or are incomplete cannot be considered for review. Applicants will receive notification of their acceptance status in August.

Application questions should be directed to Nancy Caban at ncaban@leadingageny.org or 518.867.8383. Questions about the program can be directed to Diane Darbyshire at ddarbyshire@leadingageny.org or 518.867.8828.

Application Checklist

Be sure all components of the application are completed by 5 P.M. on June 5, 2026:

- Complete [digital application](#)
- Complete essay, and email to leadershipacademy@leadingageny.org
- Ensure a Letter of Reference and [Applicant and Sponsoring Organization Commitment](#) are sent to leadershipacademy@leadingageny.org by the application deadline

Incomplete applications will not be considered.