



2026 • 48TH ANNUAL



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TACOMA | PIERCE COUNTY



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The Business Leadership Academy of Tacoma-Pierce County is an opportunity for current and emerging leaders to engage with the business community while developing leadership skills, and interacting with exemplary leaders.

We will explore leader development, assess our leadership strengths and weaknesses, learn from leaders that contribute to the vitality of our community, and visit organizations at the heart of our regional business community. During the first session, participants will be able to personalize overall learning objectives for themselves and the 2026 program. Bring your leadership and business community strengths and let us add to them together!

The Business Leadership Academy of Tacoma-Pierce County, sponsored by the Chamber and Pacific Lutheran University, is a regional community leadership program founded in 1978. Hundreds of leaders are alumni of this program and will become your network for learning and connecting.

Program Highlights & Benefits

- Learn leadership skills and build your personalized leader development plan
- Engage in assessments to learn your strengths and opportunities for growth
- Meet exemplary leaders who impact our business community
- Interact with other current and emerging leaders in the 2026 Business Leadership Academy class
- Tackle a project that benefits our community
- Increase your knowledge of the region, leaders, and decision-making processes
- Access a network of program alumni to guide individual, business and community problem-solving
- Visit organizations that add to the vitality of our region
- Craft your own Call to Action for engaging as a leader in our community

2026 Dates

Welcome Session

September 10

8:30am - 3:30pm with lunch

Weekly Sessions

September 17, 24

October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

8:30am - 11:30am

Chamber Offices

Retreat

November 5-6

Late afternoon to noon the next day

Tacoma Celebration Lunch

November 12

Program Overview

September 10: Welcome Session

Overall program design, introductions, beginning to create a personalized leadership development plan, preparing to conduct a leader profile interview, and introduction to community project. Lunch included.

September 17: The Challenge of Leading

Leaders and leading in organizations. Learning to reflect on our strengths and opportunities for growth. Leading with heart and mind. Leading by example.

September 24: Site Visit

Downtown Tacoma Walking Tour
Visits to businesses and with leaders at the heart of our community.

October 1: Visioning and Focus on the Future

How leaders lead the way in envisioning the future of the organization. Engaging others in exploring what could be and together establish inspiring, attainable visions. The critical importance of respecting and seeking after diverse perspectives.

October 8: Leading Change and Risk Taking

Seeking opportunities for change and appropriate risk taking. The leader as change agent recognizing people and process change issues. Harnessing resistance to change as an opportunity. Leading strategic communication conversations.

October 15: Site Visit

Economic Impact Exploration
Exploring leaders and organizations impacting the economy of our region.

October 22: Motivating and Lifting Others

Understanding what motivates, and creating the environment where others choose to be motivated. Effective team leadership. What followership really means and how it energizes at multiple levels. Respecting diversity. Encouraging the heart and building commitment. Understanding power and influence.

October 29: What Matters Most?

Focusing energies and building leadership skills for what matters most to us, our organizations, and our communities. The courage to lead in difficult times and circumstances. Civility as an essential leader responsibility.

November 5-6: Retreat

Integrating our leadership learning and reflecting on next steps for our personalized leader development plan. Who am I? Who do I want to be? What's next? What do I most want to influence and accomplish as a leader? Reporting on community project strategic initiative. The Leader's Call to Action.

November 12: Celebration Luncheon

Here's what Leadership Academy Alumni have to say.



"The Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber plays a vital role at the intersection of how our community lives, works, and plays—bringing together business leaders who care deeply about the place we call home. Through the Business Leadership Academy, I

gained access to these critical connections, built relationships, and became a more active leader to serve our thriving community. It's not just about doing business here—it's about showing up, engaging, and helping shape the future of Tacoma together."

Diana Royalty
COO & Co Founder, People Centric Consulting Group



"My experience in the Business Leadership Academy was transformative. Being among leaders across various industries and experience levels gave me valuable insights into my personal leadership style that have truly helped me become a more impactful leader within my organization. The program

also facilitated warm introductions to some of Tacoma's most influential leaders in business and local government, which I found to be very valuable. Through this experience, I've developed long-lasting relationships that have created meaningful opportunities for both me and the organization I lead. I highly recommend this program to any leader seeking intensive leadership development"

Vernon Hadley, MBA
Executive Director, Pearl Foundation of Puget Sound

Business Leadership Academy Alumni include many community leaders, such as:

Woodrow Jones.....	1987
Jason Whalen	1994
Marilyn Strickland.....	1997
Dan Voelpel	1999
Marty Campbell.....	2005
Andrea Smith	2007
Bett Simpson-Lucas	2007
Chelsea Levy.....	2009
Carla Santorno	2010
Debbie Lee.....	2019
Kiara Daniels	2020
Diana Royalty	2025

48TH ANNUAL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



The Business Leadership Academy of Tacoma-Pierce County begins on September 10, 2026, and continues with consecutive Thursday morning sessions until October 29, 2026. The program concludes with an overnight retreat on November 5-6, 2026, and a celebration luncheon on November 12, 2026.

Applicant Name:

Job Title:

Company:

Company Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Email:

Phone:

Supervisor Name:

Supervisor Title:

Supervisor Email:

Will you be able to fulfill the time commitment?

Yes

No

Most of the time

Do you have your employer's support and understanding of the time required to participate in the Business Leadership Academy of Tacoma-Pierce County?

Yes

No

Tuition for each participant in the Business Leadership Academy of Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber is \$1,750 and will be due in full by September 10, 2026. How will your tuition be paid? Check all that apply.

Employer

Myself

I understand, as does my employer, the purpose of the Business Leadership Academy of Tacoma-Pierce County. I also understand completion of this application does not ensure my acceptance into the Class of 2026.

If I am accepted, I agree to attend sessions, beginning September 10, 2026, concluding with the overnight retreat on November 5-6, 2026. I also agree to participate fully in a group project.

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Employer Signature:

Date:



SUBMIT TO:

Business Leadership Academy
Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber
PO Box 1933, Tacoma, WA 98401-1933

Or email to Anna Terrano: annat@tacomachamber.org

Priority deadline for all applicants is **August 14, 2026**.

PROGRAM SPONSORED BY:

