



Leadership Wilkes 2026 is a program sponsored by the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce to develop a group of informed, committed, and qualified individuals capable of providing visionary and forward-thinking leadership for Wilkes County.

The program emphasizes key leadership attributes through discussions on real-world applications and activities that showcase leadership opportunities and highlight leadership in action. Taking place over a four-month period, Leadership Wilkes 2026 participants have a chance to tour facilities, participate in informative seminars, and are educated on the resources available to them in Wilkes.

Once participants have completed Leadership Wilkes 2026, they will be well informed and have a foundation for implementing their knowledge and skills to become better citizens and leaders.

#### **THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM:**

Area leaders in business, government, education, health care, industry, and tourism enlighten participants on the resources available to Wilkes County citizens. During each session, the group will look at topics ranging from non-profits to community infrastructure. The program culminates with a graduation ceremony for participants, their guests, and alumni from previous classes.

#### **LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENTS:**

Participants are encouraged to attend all Leadership Wilkes 2026 sessions including graduation. Attendance reflects the commitment necessary to receive a meaningful experience from your investment in the program. Casual dress and good walking shoes are recommended at all sessions.

#### **TO APPLY:**

Enrollment in the Leadership Wilkes 2026 program is limited. Candidates are selected based on their previous and potential leadership ability and community involvement. **Applications must be received by July 31, 2026, to be eligible for the program.** All applicants will be notified by email regarding acceptance into the program.

Tuition for Wilkes Chamber members is \$750; non-members \$1,000.

Tuition covers the cost of facilitation, meals, refreshments, travel, and graduation. Non-profit organizations may qualify for partial financial aid. Please indicate scholarship need on the application.

For more information call 336-838-8662 or email [cbell@wilkesnc.org](mailto:cbell@wilkesnc.org).



## **LEADERSHIP WILKES 2026 SCHEDULE**

All sessions will take place on Wednesdays from 8:30am-5pm

Session I (Retreat): August 12

Session II: August 26

Session III: September 9

Session IV: September 16

Session V: September 30

Session VI: October 7

Session VII: October 14

Session VIII: October 28

Session IX (Graduation): November 4

## **Leadership Wilkes 2025 Testimonials:**

“Even as someone who has lived and worked in Wilkes for most of my life, the Leadership Wilkes program revealed so many hidden gems within our county that I had never encountered. It was an invaluable networking experience that built a much deeper sense of community for me. I truly enjoyed learning about the local initiatives that are making a massive impact, both here at home and on a global scale.”

**Kayla McCoy, Wilkes Soil and Water Conservation District**

“Participating in Leadership Wilkes was a rewarding experience! The program provided valuable insight into our community and allowed us to learn more about our local businesses. I especially appreciated the opportunity to connect with other local leaders as we worked together to improve our leadership skills.”

**-Stacey Whitley, Legacy Benefits**

“I truly appreciated going through the Wilkes Leadership class of 2025. While I’ve been part of the speedway revival since 2022 and formed many relationships over that time, I was able to gain a deeper appreciation for all that Wilkes County has to offer and the businesses and community that make it special.”

**-Graig Hoffman, North Wilkesboro Speedway**

I have used the knowledge that I obtained from Leadership Wilkes in answering many questions I have had from students and others. I have recommended some of the organizations that assisted with Leadership Wilkes for job searches as well as business recommendations. I find the Leadership Wilkes experience to be one that gave me great insight into the county and the opportunities that exist here.

**-Bruce Hollar, Wilkes Community College**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Number: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the best way to contact you?  Cell Phone  Business Phone  Email

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Leadership Wilkes Program?

Why do you want to participate in this program?



### Applicant & Employer Agreement

I have read and understand that in order to graduate from the Leadership Wilkes 2026 program, I must attend all sessions.

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This employee has my permission to attend the Leadership Wilkes 2026 program. I am aware of the time/attendance requirements.

Employer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail, fax, or email completed applications to:

Wilkes Chamber of Commerce

717 Main St North Wilkesboro, NC 28659

Fax: (336) 838-3728

Email: [cbell@wilkesnc.org](mailto:cbell@wilkesnc.org)

Tuition for the Leadership Wilkes 2026

Program Chamber Members: \$750

Non-Members: \$1,000

Tuition is non-refundable.

If mailing your application, please include payment. If sending application via fax or email, please call our office at (336) 838-8662 to discuss payment options. Please include a recent headshot with your application.

Make checks payable to: Wilkes Chamber of Commerce

Additional Comments