



LeadingAge®
Iowa

2026

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Why starts with You

www.LeadingAgeIowa.org/Leadership-Academy

Overview

The LeadingAge Iowa Leadership Academy is a self-reflective journey, preparing new and seasoned leaders to better understand their leadership strengths and take their leadership to another level. Throughout the journey, authentic transformational leadership will be explored. The resources shared during the summits are thought provoking and can be shared with team members at each organization.

During the four summits (February, April, June, and August), fellows will engage in individual and group exercises utilizing reflective, creative, and interactive education techniques. Fellows will enhance their leadership capacity through this challenging and engaging learning environment so they are better equipped to serve the aging services field.

Fellows also have the opportunity to develop strong relationships with aging services professionals from across the state, the coaches, and the facilitator which provides resources and support well after the conclusion of the four summits. The Spring Conference registration is also included in the tuition to enhance the experience and networking opportunities.

Target Audience

The program is available to anyone who works for a LeadingAge Iowa member community irrespective of clinical or managerial experience. Leadership potential within one's organization is far more important than specific job title. We encourage the identification and application of staff that are emerging leaders within member communities.

Sponsored by:



Guide



Julie Thorson began her career with Friendship Haven as a part-time social worker. She then went on to serve as activity director, admission coordinator, sales director, sales and marketing director, development director, and administrator of the Tompkins Health Center, in 2012 she was named president/CEO. Julie graduated from the University of Kansas with a BA in broadcast news. After working in her field for two years in Mason City, she longed to return to her hometown, so she returned to Fort Dodge and got that first job with Friendship Haven. She knew almost immediately that long-term care was her passion. Julie was the 2018 recipient of the LeadingAge Dr. Herbert Shore Outstanding Mentor of the Year award. She is a graduate of the LeadingAge Larry Minnix Leadership Academy and served as a coach for the Academy during 2020 and 2021. She also completed the LeadingAge Leadership Educator Program in 2019.

Application Deadline

January 16, 2026

February 25–26, 2026

Friendship Haven, Fort Dodge

Theme: Introduction and self-leading

Summit 1

April 1–2, 2026

Deerfield Retirement Community,
Urbandale

Theme: Transformational leadership/
leading without title

Summit 2

June 10–11, 2026

Oaknoll Retirement Residence, Iowa City

Theme: Leading and coaching others

Summit 3

August 19–20, 2026

Perry Lutheran Homes, Perry

Theme: Reflection and going forward

Summit 4

May 6–7, 2026

Spring Conference & Solutions Expo

The Meadows Events & Conference Center, Altoona

What's Included

- Custom 360-degree leadership evaluation.
- Small group and individual coaching sessions.
- Community site tours.
- Engagement with seasoned aging services leaders and other field experts.
- Leadership books and articles.
- Refreshment breaks and lunches for each of the summits
- Dinner with faculty, coaches, and fellows on the first night of each summit.
- Signature Event Registration (valued at \$400+)

**Signature
Event
Registration
Included**

Participant Criteria

- Class members (referred to as “fellows”) must be members of LeadingAge Iowa and complete a brief, online application form to be considered for acceptance. The applicant’s sponsoring organization must complete their portion of the online application as well. In the event a Fellow no longer meets the program’s eligibility criteria, including being employed by a supporting LeadingAge Iowa member organization, his/her continued involvement in the Leadership Academy is subject to review and should be brought to the attention of LeadingAge Iowa staff.
- The selection committee will consist of Julie Thorson, LAI CEO and LAILA coaches.
- There will be a minimum class size of 14 fellows and a maximum class size of 21 fellows.
- The program’s interactive nature demands a high level of participation and requires that Fellows complete all projects, assignments, and readings as well as attend all program-related meetings, sit visits, sessions, and conference calls.

Application Process

Applications are due on **January 16, 2026**. Tuition is \$2,750 (non-refundable and non-transferable) per participant. Tuition includes meeting materials and meals provided during sessions. Lodging and travel expenses will be incurred by the member community. No cancellations, refunds, or partial refunds will be processed after the application deadline. [Click here](#) to apply online.



“I recently had the incredible opportunity over the last 6 months to participate in the LeadingAge “Leadership Academy,” and I can’t recommend it enough! This experience has truly transformed me, both as a leader and as a person. The insights and growth I’ve gained have made me stronger in my role at work and more thoughtful in my daily life. If you ever get the chance to take part in this program, don’t hesitate—it’s a game-changer! So grateful for this journey of self-improvement and leadership development.”

“What I liked best was the leadership mentors and the variety of tools that we can use in our day to day life that were shared.”

“Julie is very knowledgeable and confident in what she shares. She has a system in place that allows everyone to feel heard without pressure to share.”

**Comments
from previous
classes**

Our Leadership Academy comes highly recommended with 100% of attendees saying they would recommend the program to their colleagues.

Continuing Education Information

- **Iowa Board of Nursing Provider** – The content in this program is intended to meet the criteria established by the Iowa Board of Nursing . Up to 11 contact hours for each summit will be available for participants who attend each summit in its entirety. Partial credit for individual sessions will not be granted. To receive contact hours or a certificate of attendance, you must attend the entire summit. Retain your certificate for four years.
- **Nursing Home Administrators** – The content in this program is intended to meet the criteria established by the Iowa Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators. Up to 11 contact hours for each summit will be available for participants who attend each summit in its entirety. Partial credit for individual sessions will not be granted. You must attend the entire summit to receive contact hours or a certificate of attendance. Retain your certificate for four years.
- **Certified Dietary Managers** – LeadingAge Iowa will seek continuing education approval for each summit for certified dietary managers by the Association of Nutrition and Foodservice Professionals. Partial credit for individual sessions will not be granted. To receive contact hours or a certificate of attendance, you must attend the entire summit. If audited, you will be asked to provide your certificate of attendance and program material. Retain certificate for six years. Log in to www.ANFPonline.org to report your CE credit using the Prior Approval Program ID# for each Summit.
- **Social Workers** – The content in this program is intended to meet the criteria established by the Iowa Board of Examiners for Social Workers. Up to 11 contact hours for each summit will be available for participants who attend each summit in its entirety. Partial credit for individual sessions will not be granted. You must attend the entire summit to receive contact hours or a certificate of attendance. Retain your certificate for four years.
- **For other long-term support and service provider professional not listed above:** Most licensure boards, credentialing agencies and professional organizations have processes that allow individuals to earn a certain number of CEUs for non-preapproved programs and/or to accommodate self-submission for approval of continuing education hours after the event takes place with proper documentation from the program sponsors. Most also require information objectives, date/time of presentation, agendas, faculty bios and number of hours earned. If you require information for this purpose, please contact LeadingAge Iowa in advance for assistance.