

## PURPOSE

The future of our county and its organizations depends on a diverse group of capable and committed leaders.

The Stephenson County Leadership Institute is committed to developing and sustaining a network of local leaders who are:

- Knowledgeable about community issues
- Able to demonstrate effective leadership and collaboration skills
- Committed to building and improving our organizations and communities

The Leadership Institute is part of a leadership development program at Highland Community College, which provides opportunities to all segments of the College community to learn more about leadership.

### EXPAND YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL ISSUES

- The regional economy
- Environment and recreation
- Agriculture
- Local government
- The judicial system
- Education, health, and social services

*"The HCC Leadership Institute has reinvigorated and deepened my engagement with our changing community with ever expanding relationships and mutually beneficial partnerships, both personal and professional."*

Brian LeBaron

*"Leadership Institute was the catalyst I needed to understand how our community operates. A comprehensive program, LI gave me the confidence to know that I can make a difference within our community."*

Marcy Folgate

*"As a longtime member of the farming community, I wasn't real sure what the Leadership Institute could do for me, or more importantly, what I could bring to it. I found that the program enlightened me on community topics and activities and more importantly, that many others were very interested in learning more about the agriculture profession. I would recommend it to anyone!!!"*

Greg Miller

### GAIN NEW LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS

- Alternate models of leadership
- An inventory of your personal leadership practices
- Creating effective teams
- Planning and visioning
- Ethical leadership
- Managing change
- Personality preferences

*"There is no better way to be a successful leader for your career and your community than being a part of The Leadership Institute!"*

Pam Hoffman

*"The Leadership Institute gave me a framework to examine and improve on my strengths and weaknesses as a leader. It provided me with real world practice to mold a vision with others, sustain that vision through to completion, and celebrate the end results with those involved. The program energized me!"*

Ron Mattson

*"I really didn't know what to expect when I signed up for the Leadership Institute. The program has given me leadership tools, community insight, and friendships that will last well after the class ends. I would highly recommend the Institute for anyone who wants to learn and grow as a leader!"*

Tammie Evenstad

*"The Leadership Institute provides the tools necessary to develop extraordinary community leaders. The Leadership Institute provides an opportunity for participants to gain valuable insight into their personality traits and leadership style."*

Latacia Ishmon

### EXPLORE WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE GOING

- Our values
- Community history
- Immigration then and now

*"The Leadership Institute was a great self-discovery experience for me and helped me to become a better mentor and leader. The program provided tools and practical applications suitable to our local needs and opportunities. I met great people and made lasting connections, while learning about what a rich history, geography and ever changing economy we share."*

Mark Gridley

*"The Leadership Institute is so much more than just learning and developing specific skills. The institute has truly opened my eyes to the communities of Stephenson County and I have gained so much knowledge on what is needed and involved with making our communities better and brighter."*

LeAnn Clark

*"The Highland Community College's Leadership Institute is one of the best programs in which I've participated. By combining evidence-based leadership concepts with a comprehensive introduction to our area, its strengths, and its needs, the program inspired me to find ways to contribute to my community and be a better leader for my teams. The opportunity to develop enduring relationships with other area business people deeply enhances this 9-month program. The HCC Leadership Institute is one of the top hidden gems in Stephenson County."*

Karen Christen

*"Leadership Institute was nothing short of a rewarding, excellent experience. I learned much about Stephenson County and grew professionally through the leadership principles taught within the curriculum. All this occurred while forging new connections and friendships with my classmates. We are fortunate to have a program such as this that supports our growth and development, and helps us understand the area that we serve as leaders."*

Megan Cox

*"I have learned so much. I have taken the practical information of this class and have been able to apply it personally, professionally, as well as spiritually! I am amazed and grateful for this class. Just Awesome!"*

Michelle D. Griggs



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# FORMAT

The Leadership Institute begins in September with a two and one-half day opening retreat at Eagle Ridge Inn and Resort. After that, the Institute generally meets on the third Wednesday of each month from September through May.

## 2025 - 2026 SCHEDULE AND PROPOSED LEADERSHIP TOPICS

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September 7 - 9  
**Opening Retreat**  
Leadership, the Community, and You

September 17  
Understanding Leadership Styles

October 15  
Challenging the Process

November 19  
Inspiring a Shared Vision

December 10  
Enabling Others to Act

January 21  
Modeling the Way

February 18  
Encouraging the Heart

March 4  
Ethical Decision Making

March 25  
Project Planning

April 15  
Finding Your Voice

May 13  
Closing Retreat and Banquet

### Faculty

Evan Talbert, Instructor at Highland Community College, serves as a co-facilitator of the Leadership Institute.

Sam VenHuizen, Lender at Citizens State Bank, also serves as a co-facilitator of the Leadership Institute.

Numerous local guest speakers address the Institute monthly.

### Join Us

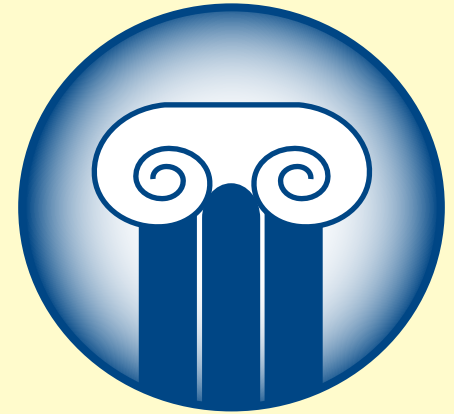
The Leadership Institute seeks men and women from a wide range of community and career interests. Each class will have approximately 25 members selected from applicants on the basis of their interest in leadership issues and their representation of the diversity of our county.

### Cost

The cost of the nine-month Leadership Institute is \$1,500. The fee for books and materials is \$500. Scholarship assistance is available. Contact Evan Talbert, 815.599.3510, for further scholarship details.

### Applications

Application forms are available from Evan Talbert, Director, Leadership Institute, Highland Community College, 2998 W Pearl City Rd, Freeport, IL 61032, 815.599.3510, [evan.talbert@highland.edu](mailto:evan.talbert@highland.edu), or by checking the Highland website at [www.highland.edu](http://www.highland.edu). Applications are due by July 1, 2025. The class of 2025 - 2026 will be announced in August 2025.



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Stephenson County

## LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE 2025 - 2026

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