

# BLOWING ROCK LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

## Class of 2026

*TO INFORM . . . TO MOTIVATE . . . TO CHALLENGE*

### What is Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge?

The Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge is an innovative leadership development program sponsored by the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce. This program is designed to meet our community's future needs for the active participation of informed and educated leaders. The goal of the program is to identify potential leaders and provide them with the community information and encouragement needed to spur local action and involvement. Graduates are challenged to apply their talents throughout the community by becoming a part of local organizations, including public boards, nonprofit groups, civic clubs and the Chamber.



The mission of the Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge is the continued improvement of our community. The profile of Blowing Rock and our county is changing and today's leaders need to have access to more timely information. Visits with community and government leaders offer opportunities to interact with those affecting change.

The 8-week long program will enable participants to gain a realistic understanding of how our community works and help create an awareness of our community's current interests. Participants are encouraged to explore our community and challenged to become involved in the issues that affect them.

### How is the Program Structured?

Participants (and their employers) are asked to make a major time commitment to nine sessions, beginning with a full-day retreat session on **March 6th** and closing with a wrap up session and graduation ceremony **April 22nd**. A series of seven half-day sessions provides information about the community and includes tours of area businesses, governmental organizations and community facilities. The sessions are planned by experts and leaders in the topic area and will offer information and thoughtful analysis. Sessions are designed to stimulate interest and awareness and will include an opportunity to interact with the speakers and discussion leaders.

### How are Participants Selected?

The class is open to 15 participants. Residents or employees of Blowing Rock businesses should complete the enclosed application, which will be reviewed by a selection committee. After a thorough review of all applications submitted, participants will be selected in an effort to form a group of gender, geographical, general and occupational balance. To graduate, attendance at all scheduled sessions is expected. The class tuition fee of \$375 includes program materials, refreshments for all sessions, graduation dinner and diploma. Program sponsors supplement other costs. For additional information contact the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce at (828) 295-7851.



**Application Form**  
**BLOWING ROCK LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE 2026**

**Return Date: February 1, 2026**

**Return to: Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 406, Blowing Rock, NC 28605**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Known As \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

*The responsibilities of my position include:*

\_\_\_\_\_

**EDUCATION**

High School \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_ Diploma/Year \_\_\_\_\_

College or Other \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_ Diploma/Year \_\_\_\_\_

Post Graduate \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_ Diploma/Year \_\_\_\_\_

**Community activities in which I have participated (list in order of importance to you)**

Activity \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Activity \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Activity \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

*What do you feel you have accomplished in these areas?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*I wish to participate in the Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge 2026 because* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Other Areas of Interest for Biographical Sketch**

Hometown \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Family (include names and ages of children) \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies and Interests \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dietary restrictions / food allergies / snack preferences \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2026 BLOWING ROCK LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE PROGRAM

Friday, March 6, 2026 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Kickoff Retreat Session	Full day Friday. Orientation, meet classmates; distribution of course materials and team building exercises. Blowing Rock Conference Center
Sunday, March 8 3:00 pm. - 5:30 pm.	History of Blowing Rock	Afternoon high tea with local speakers to hear from natives about Blowing Rock’s history and culture. Historic Green Park Inn*
Wednesday, March 11 12:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Civic Infrastructure	Presentations from government officials. Meet elected officials. Tours of Town offices and facilities. The function and operation of local city and county government will be reviewed. Blowing Rock Town Hall, Council Chambers
Wednesday, March 18 1:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Business Development	Tour local businesses and hear from various speakers on the local economy. The importance of various economic sectors (tourism, real estate, retail) will be discussed. Chetola Resort*
Wednesday, March 25 1:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Workforce Development	Update on the status of Watauga County Schools, current issues and long-range plans. Tours of related facilities. Role of Caldwell Community College, App State, Workforce Development, NC Works & Watauga EDC Watauga High School—Room TBA
Wednesday, April 1 1:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Physical Infrastructure	Current challenges in infrastructure and environmental issues will be reviewed. Tour water or waste water treatment plant and other facilities. Meadowbrook Inn,
Wednesday, April 8 1:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Cultural Infrastructure	Review role of the arts and their associated organizations and businesses. Cultural heritage, livability issues and downtown vitalization will also be addressed. BRAHM , Community Meeting Room,
Wednesday, April 15 12:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Social Infrastructure	Presentations and tours planned by local healthcare organizations, social services and other community based groups. Samaritan’s Center*
Wednesday, April 22 11:30—5:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Closing Session Graduation Event	The closing session will allow participants to review the total program and focus on future direction. The graduation event will provide an opportunity for the graduate to celebrate his/her success with their family and work colleagues. An after dinner speaker will challenge the graduates to become more involved in the future of Blowing Rock. Chamber / Blowing Rock Country Club*

If selected for the 2026 class of Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge, I commit to attend the retreat, all eight sessions and the graduation event. Attendance at the retreat is mandatory. I understand that if I am unable to attend a session, I will be asked to attend some alternate event as a make up session in order to qualify for graduation.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

As the employer or direct supervisor of \_\_\_\_\_, I authorize my employee to be absent from work for the dates shown on this application.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business or Organization \_\_\_\_\_



## **BLOWING ROCK LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE 2026**

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Blowing Rock  
Chamber of Commerce  
132 Park Avenue  
P.O. Box 406  
Blowing Rock, NC 28605

[HardinCE@BlowingRock.com](mailto:HardinCE@BlowingRock.com)

Phone: 828-295-7851

## **The Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge**

The Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge is a partnership effort of several local and regional organizations. The Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce is the producing sponsor and is responsible for overall coordination of the program and the selection of participants.

Many organizations participate in this effort and have provided resource people who have assisted in the design, development and implementation of the program. Local organizations and businesses are also involved in the program as host locations, tour sites, and session speakers and panelists.

The graduates of the first Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge in 2007 formed an Alumni Association to promote the continued involvement of class members through an ongoing program of events and networking opportunities. The alumni are participating in the design and programming of classes for 2024 and hosting specific class sessions. Graduates are encouraged to join the alumni group and become more involved in the community by joining civic groups, public boards as well as the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce. The Alumni will produce the local Candidate's Forum as a class project in October of 2025.