



Providing the education, resources and networks needed to develop travel leaders for the State of Ohio.

With support from:



Elevate Your Involvement in Ohio's Travel Economy

If you're considering a greater role in Ohio's travel industry or wish to understand how tourism operates at the state level, the Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy is the perfect opportunity for you. This innovative program connects you with industry peers who are trailblazers in their field, introduces key industry challenges and opportunities in a manner that fosters creative solutions, and provides a foundational understanding of what it means to be a leader in Ohio.

Upon graduation, you'll possess the networks, knowledge, and confidence needed to serve more effectively on regional and state boards and to become a more active voice in legislative matters.

Program Details

The Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy builds leaders by fostering knowledge, developing leadership skills, strengthening networks and informing participants about the responsibilities of boardmanship. The program consists of six classes with session locations taking place in the Greater Columbus area. Each session begins at 10 a.m. and concludes at 3 p.m.

During the sessions, you will be introduced to critical regional and statewide tourism issues. You will meet and discuss issues with leaders from statewide public, private and non-profit related agencies. Through panel discussions, round tables, presentations, tours and other activities, the Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy will build a stronger Ohio by forging stronger leaders within the travel industry.



2025 Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy

Candidate Selection

Participants are selected in an objective process and must be recommended and sponsored by their employers, generally by the chief executive officer. Self-employed persons may sponsor themselves. Sponsorship may also be made by non-profit organizations. Candidates will be sought who have high energy and passion for the tourism industry. They should be articulate, available to commit and able to demonstrate a willingness to learn new skills and put them into action after graduation.

Participation in the sessions represents a significant commitment of time and dedication on the part of those chosen for the program. They will be required to attend all sessions to graduate unless absence is excused by the Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy organizers. Applicants should be aware that there may be more nominees than class size permits. Candidates are selected exclusively on their own merits.

OTLA is such an important experience that I would recommend time and time again! Hearing from such a wide variety of speakers opened my eyes to all the different facets that make up the travel industry. Every class I would leave with new connections, new resources, and new ideas to bring back to my team. The relationships you make here are just as important as the tools you learn. A few of my fellow classmates quickly became trusted professional peers that I can call for advice and collaborate with on new ideas.

Margaret Jennings, Ashtabula County Visitors Bureau

Application Deadline

Dec. 12, 2025

Completed applications for the 2026 program must be received by the Ohio Travel Association by Dec. 12, 2025. Applicants will be notified of their selection by Dec. 19, 2025

Tuition

Tuition for the 2026 program is \$935 for current OTA members and \$1,010 for non-members. Tuition fees are established to cover the cost of materials, supplementary data, meals and administration of the program. Non-member rates also include one-year OTA membership. Tuition does not include conference registration.



Please contact Melinda Huntley, OTA Executive Director, with any questions at mhuntley@ohiotravel.org



2026 Schedule

Jan. 20

Leadership and the Economy
Department of Agriculture, Reynoldsburg

Feb. 11

Community & Boardsmanship
Riffe Building, Columbus

March 11

Advocacy
Huntington Building, Columbus

April 22

Niche Marketing
Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, Columbus

May 13

Placemaking
Octagon Earthworks, Licking County

June 24

Empowered to Lead
Ohio History Connection, Columbus

Oct. 9

Graduation During the 2026
Ohio Conference on Travel
Roberts Centre, Wilmington



2026 Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy Application

Contact Information:

Name: _____
Title: _____
Employer: _____ Hire Date: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone #: _____ Cell #: _____
Business Email: _____
Emergency Contact and Phone #: _____

Employment Information:

Briefly describe your work responsibilities:

What employment have you held in the last five years other than this current job?

Dates	Employer	Duties
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Education:

Dates	Schools/Colleges Attended	Degree
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Academic or Professional Awards/Honors:

Community Activities and Board(s) Involvement:

Current Affiliations:

Organization	Dates	Office Held

Have you graduated from a local leadership program? If so, which one?

Briefly state your personal goals for the next five years: (Use separate sheet if necessary)

Why do you want to attend the Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy? (Use separate sheet if necessary)

I am willing to commit my time, talents, and energy to the Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy’s Class of 2026. I will conduct myself always in a professional manner, understanding that I am representing my company and the Ohio Travel Association at every event. Signing below indicates my dedication to the program and provides proof of my employer’s support if applicable. Signing below also indicates my attendance at sessions. If a session must be missed, advance notice must be given to OTLA coordinators following guidelines discussed at January session.

I also understand payment is due upon submission of application. No refunds after Dec. 31, 2025, as class size is limited. Canceling after class members are selected could take the opportunity away from a colleague. Tuition cannot be transferred to another year. Substitutions are permitted until the beginning of the first session. Payment will be refunded if applicant is not selected for this year’s class.

Applicant Signature	Date	Board President or Supervisor Signature	Date
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Please send this signed form to sarah@ohiotravel.org.
We Will Then Send You an Online Invoice
Or
Mail This Application Along with Payment to
Ohio Travel Association / P.O. Box 189/ Pickerington, OH 43147.