

The Chamber of Catawba County

LEADERSHIP CATAWBA

CLASS OF 2027

Building a Stronger
Catawba County...
One Leader at a Time.

LEADERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT
TEAM BUILDING



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The Chamber
OF CATAWBA COUNTY
Working for business



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Since 1974, **Leadership Catawba** has educated and equipped hundreds of Catawba County residents with information about the social, economic, and political dynamics of our community. Over 8-months, participants are immersed in community issues and challenges that we position ourselves to directly address in the areas of Reinventing Community, Telling our Story, Workforce Connectivity, Building for Jobs, Serving our Community, and Small Business and Entrepreneurship. The program challenges each participant not only to be an effective and influential leader within their own organization, but to lead within our greater community through personal commitment and involvement.

Diversity Statement: Leadership Catawba is committed to identifying and nurturing leaders who reflect the diversity represented in our businesses and in the greater community. We recognize the positive relationship between diversity and a thriving economy and therefore are intentional in our efforts to recruit, grow, and support leaders from diverse ethnic, racial, gender, socioeconomic, and professional backgrounds. We strive for inclusiveness in our programming, class participation, advisory board leadership, and community partnerships and actively seek to include individuals from historically under-represented backgrounds. We encourage business leaders to consider all aspects of diversity when recommending individuals for participation in Leadership Catawba.

Leadership Catawba Quick Facts:

- Leadership Catawba pulls together people of diverse backgrounds and experiences who have demonstrated leadership potential throughout our community.
- Leadership Catawba provides the opportunity to connect on a deeper level to our county, preparing individuals to grow personally and professionally as future leaders.
- The program kicks off in August with a half-day orientation and a full-day team building retreat.
- Each participant graduates with approximately 16 hours of situational leadership training from a diverse array of community leaders and contracted consultants.
- Leadership Catawba tuition includes a full PXT Select Leadership Report and a full post analysis (\$250 value).
- Participants organize and execute a Community Visioning Impact project which directly addresses critical issues our county is facing, aimed at making a sustainable impact.
- The program concludes with a special Graduation Celebration.

Schedule for 2026-2027 Leadership Catawba

August 2026 – Orientation & Retreat

Thursday, August 13th (11:00 am–5:00 pm)
Friday, August 14th (8:30 am–4:30 pm)

September 2026 – Reinventing Community

Thursday, September 10th (8:00 am–5:00 pm)
Thursday, September 17th (8:00 am–12:00 pm)

October 2026 – Telling Our Story

Thursday, October 8th (8:00 am–5:00 pm)
RAIN DATE: Tuesday, October 13th (8:00 am–5:00 pm)
Thursday, October 15th (8:00 am–12:00 pm)

November 2026 – Workforce Connectivity

Thursday, November 5th (8:00 am–5:00 pm)
Thursday, November 12th (8:00 am–12:00 pm)

December 2026 – Building For Jobs

Thursday, December 10th (8:00 am–5:00 pm)
Thursday, December 17th (8:00 am–12:00 pm)

January 2027 – Serving Our Community

Thursday, January 14th (8:00 am–5:00 pm)
Thursday, January 21st (8:00 am–12:00 pm)

February 2027 – Small Business & Entrepreneurship

Thursday, February 11th (8:00 am–5:00 pm)
Thursday, February 18th (8:00 am–1:00 pm)

March 2027 – Class of 2027 Graduation Celebration

Thursday, March 11th (3:00–6:00 pm)

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Leadership Catawba is The Chamber of Catawba County's longest running program. We have been creating a pipeline of community leaders since 1974.

Leadership Catawba provides the opportunity to connect on a deeper level to our county and interact directly with key community leaders, preparing individuals to grow personally and professionally as a future leader.

The Leadership Catawba program extends over an eight month period. Participants will attend a total of six full-day and six half-day program sessions from September through February, with graduation held in March 2027.

To graduate, attendance at all scheduled events is expected; attendance at Orientation and the Retreat is mandatory. No more than 12 total hours may be missed to complete the program and graduate.

Tuition for Leadership Catawba is \$1,700 (Chamber partners) and \$2,200 (general public) and will be due by July 23, 2026. Tuition covers program costs including the retreat, meals and graduation. Upon invoicing, payment may be made by check or credit card (with a convenience fee). If an applicant cancels within 15 business days prior to Orientation (by July 23, 2026), one-half of the full tuition will be forfeited. If applicant cancels after July 23, 2026, the entire tuition will be forfeited.

Applications will open at 11:00 am on May 19, 2026. The deadline is May 22, 2026 or when the class reaches capacity of thirty-six (36), whichever comes first. Participants are selected on a first come basis once the application process has opened. A delay in submitting a completed application may result in being placed on the alternate list for the 2026-2027 program.

The program is limited to one (1) participant per business, ensuring the greatest exposure to other community and business leaders throughout the county. Should a second team member be interested in attending, their completed application will be placed on a wait list, pending availability.

2026-2027 Leadership Catawba is Proudly Sponsored by:



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Leadership Catawba WHY

First-person impact stories contributed by graduates of the Leadership Catawba Class of 2026.

“Leadership Catawba provided a powerful opportunity to meet inspiring people from across the community and learn from their diverse perspectives. Through meaningful conversations and shared experiences, I built connections that broadened my understanding of effective leadership. I also gained practical tools and insights that will help me grow as a confident, thoughtful and impactful leader.”

Brittany Huffman, *Highstreet Insurance Partners*

“Leadership Catawba provides great insight and perspective about community, local business, government leadership, and future growth of Catawba County.”

Justin Browning, *Merchants Distributors, Inc.*

“I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity Leadership Catawba provided me. I am grateful to meet my classmates and build meaningful relationships which I believe are the foundation of a successful community. This experience has strengthened my perspective and commitment to serving our community.”

Christy Lefevers, *Catawba Valley Community College*

“Leadership Catawba grows you as a community member. It opens your eyes to areas that you see every day. And introduces you to other individuals who are similar to you, but vastly different. It provides an opportunity for you to learn from those people, and that is what makes it so incredible.”

Will McCarrick, *City of Hickory*

“Leadership Catawba was an incredible experience. I learned so many things about Catawba County that I never knew before—and even things I didn't realize I needed to know. The relationships built and the knowledge gained made it truly worthwhile. Such a great experience!”

Ashley Moose, *Director of Student Involvement and Leadership, Lenoir-Rhyne University*

“The program allows for an ample amount of time to learn about various county programs, initiatives, municipalities, and businesses. As leaders we need to be able to speak about what's available in our county, as well as connect friends, family and colleagues to the service services. Additionally, through the knowledge gained, a greater desire to get involved in volunteerism has grown. Specifically, personalized leadership assessments help create awareness of strengths and weaknesses, which will direct my future leadership development focus.”

Nick Seiler, *Frye Regional Medical Center*

**For questions or inquiries about
Leadership Catawba, please contact:**

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Leadership Catawba Partners

The Class of 2026 engaged with over 146 collaborative partners, thought leaders and subject matter experts from 106 companies/organizations.

Abernethy Laurels	First Horizon Bank	Northwest NC Mountain Bike Alliance
Appalachian State University	Frye Regional Medical Center	NuTex Concepts
Arts Culture Catawba	Gas UP	Peoples Bank
Ashure Ministry, Inc.	Goodwill Industries of NWCN, Inc.- Workforce Development Center	Project Re-Entry
Atriax, PLLC	Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry	Richey May North Carolina
Career Connections / Graduate Services	Green Park Dentistry	Sarstedt, Inc.
Carolina Caring	Hart Square Foundation, Inc.	SERVPRO of Catawba County
Carpenter Co.	Hickory Crawdads	Shining Hope Farms
Catawba County	Hickory FC	Shurtape Technologies, LLC
Catawba County Council on Aging	Hickory Metro Convention Center & Visitors Bureau	Sipe's Orchard Home
Catawba County Economic Development Corporation	Highstreet Insurance Partners	Skyline National Bank
Catawba County Government	HKY4Vets	Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC) at Appalachian State University
Catawba County Library System	HSM Solutions	Smith Leonard PLLC
Catawba County Partnership for Children	Human Resource Solutions, Inc.	Smurfit Westrock
Catawba County Schools	Infinity Contractors	Strong Direct
Catawba County United Way	InnovaKnits	The Corner Table
Catawba Valley Community College	Integrity Roofing LLC	The HOPE Center at the Hickory Soup Kitchen
Catawba Valley Habitat for Humanity	Interstate Foam & Supply, Inc.	The Hospice Resale Shop
Catawba Valley Health System	Just Dump It	The Manufacturing Solutions Center at CVCC
CertainTeed / Saint-Gobain	Kaepchar, LLC	The Salvation Army of Greater Hickory and the High Country
City of Claremont	Kathedra	Thread the Word
City of Conover	Kintegra Health	Top Flite Home Loans, Inc.
City of Hickory	Knit Engine	Town of Catawba
City of Hickory Parks, Recreation and Sports Tourism	Lake Hickory Pub and Marina	Town of Long View
City of Newton	Landmark Roofing	Town of Maiden
Clothing 2.0	Lenoir-Rhyne University	Treetop Adventures on Lake Hickory
CommScope	Lenoir-Rhyne University Entrepreneurship	True North Realty
Cranford Hospitality	Lumin Strategies	VEDIC
CVCC Small Business Center	Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A.	WAXmd
CVCC ValleySIM Hospital	MDI - Merchants Distributors LLC	Western Piedmont Council of Governments
David E. Looper & Company, Inc.	NC Works Career Center	Williams Capital Holdings and Southern Capital Ventures
Design Foundry, LLC	NCWorks NextGen Program	Williams-Sonoma, Inc. / Sutter Street Manufacturing
EveryAge	New Beginnings	YMCA of Catawba Valley
Evolved by Nature	Newton-Conover City Schools	
Exodus Homes & Exodus Works	Newton-Conover Middle School	
Family Care Center of Catawba Valley, Inc.	North Hickory Market	
First Citizens Bank		