

# Tennessee Extension Leadership Academy

## 2024 - 2025

### Overview

UT Extension embraces its own mission and vision to be the premier educational organization for all Tennesseans by developing highly engaged personnel who serve their community, office, and Extension.

Through leadership development, employees will become self-aware of their strengths, how to utilize those strengths to lead others and to grow an organizational culture where employees thrive and the communities we serve prosper. Extension aims to foster interest in and prepare employees for leadership roles across the organization and to enable participants to better serve as leaders in any role or capacity.

The new cohort begins in September and will utilize a variety of learning strategies including multi-day overnight events, webinars, assignments and a required Leadership Journey Plan. Sessions are held in all three Regions and on UTIA Campus.

*"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."  
— John Quincy Adams*

### Participants

Cohorts are made up of a group of 20 individuals comprised of five individuals from each region and five from state offices.

Employees who have a regular, full-time Extension appointment and have been employed for at least three years are eligible to apply. Qualifying applicants include but are not limited to: administrative assistants, agents, county directors, program assistants, specialists, or support staff.

### Goals

Participants will:

- Strengthen skills including self-awareness, teamwork, communication, conflict management, navigating change, and increasing innovation.
- Build relationships with other aspiring leaders across the organization to foster professional growth.
- Better understand how individuals and teams work together to contribute to the larger vision and efficacy of Tennessee Extension services.

Dates	Format	Location
August 14, 2024	Virtual	Zoom 9:00-11:00 CST
September 17-19, 2024	In Person	Sevierville
October 4, 2024	Virtual	Zoom 9:00-11:00 CST
November 19-21, 2024	In Person	Memphis
December 9, 2024	Virtual	Zoom 9:00-11:00 CST
January 7-9, 2025	In Person	Knoxville
February 6, 2025	Virtual	Zoom 9:00-11:00 CST
March 11-12, 2025	In Person	Nashville

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### Leadership Academy Projects

Participants will complete two projects throughout the course of the program.

#### Group Leadership Book Application

Participants will read a pre-selected book and work with a group to facilitate a 20-minute leadership activity for the rest of the cohort members during the third session. The activity should apply concepts or ideas from the book.

#### Individual Leadership Journey Plan

Throughout the program, the participants will develop a plan to apply leadership concepts in a way that aligns with each individual's personal and professional interests. Participants will develop and present their plan in the fourth session. Examples could include:

- Identify a new community/agency/foundation/partner to develop a new program a or partnership and begin to build it.
- Plan and implement a new activity or program that meets an unmet need.
- Build a volunteer development system.
- Work within an existing team to accelerate it to a new level.

### Application Requirements

Applications can be submitted at [TELA.tennessee.edu](http://TELA.tennessee.edu) between February 1 and February 29, 2024. For an application to be considered complete, it must include:

1. A document that adequately addresses:
  - what you would like to gain from this program.
  - a leadership experience that you have had that was impactful for you.
  - your Extension leadership goals and aspirations.
2. A letter of support from your direct supervisor.
3. Your favorite leadership quote.

### Selection Process

All complete applications that have been submitted will be reviewed by the TELA Development Committee and then approved by the appropriate Region Director and/or Department Head and Dean Stokes. Application submission does not guarantee program admission. Applicants will be notified by May 1, 2024 of their acceptance status and have until May 15th to confirm their acceptance.

### Time Commitment

Participants who apply agree to fully participate in all scheduled meetings and fulfill program requirements. Before applying, please make sure that you have all dates available and are willing to commit additional time for independent projects.

*"A leader is anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential."*

*- Brene Brown, Dare to Lead*

### Additional Information

- Personnel who are 100% funded by grant contracts are encouraged to apply after receiving approval from their department head.
- All necessary travel expenses and resources for selected participants will be covered by Extension Administration.
- It is not recommended to complete TELA and LEAD95 concurrently.
- If you have any questions, please reach out to [TELA@utk.edu](mailto:TELA@utk.edu).

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### Session 1: Discovering You

Location: East Tennessee (Dream More Resort)

Date: September 2024

Goals: Establish the leadership journey by increasing self-awareness.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Identify personal strengths and areas of growth
- Learn/increase understanding about leadership style and ethical leadership
- Develop greater skills in logical and critical thinking
- Discover ways to implement work/life balance
- Engage in networking and build relationship with other cohort members

Session Includes:

CliftonStrengths Themes Assessment

Ethical leadership

Leadership styles

Tour of Dollywood

### Session 2: Leading Others

Location: West Tennessee (Peabody Hotel)

Date: November 2024

Goal: Build interpersonal and communication skills to effectively lead others.

Objectives:

Participants will:

- Recognize and value teamwork.
- Demonstrate openness and flexibility to different work styles and strengths.
- Seek solutions that foster and enhance relationships.
- Demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusivity.

Session Includes:

Inclusive Leadership

Emotional Intelligence and Empathy in Leadership

Communication, Team Building, Relationship Building

Visionary Leadership

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## Session 3: Leading within the Organization

Location: UTIA Campus

Date: January 2024

Goals: Lead and empower others to support the vision and mission of Tennessee Extension.

### Objectives:

#### Participants will:

- Apply and teach leadership concepts.
- Develop collaboration and partnership skills.
- Model behavior consistent with organizational values.
- Use visionary leadership skills to achieve goals and navigate change.

### Topics Include:

Book Presentations

Public Accountability and Advocacy for Extension

Navigating and Adapting to Change

Leading with Vision

## Session 4: Graduation

Location: Central Tennessee (Nashville)

Date: March 2024

Goals: Showcase knowledge gained and skills learned to celebrate accomplishments of cohort members.

### Objectives:

#### Participants will:

- Present final Leadership Journey Plan.
- Complete evaluation of program.
- Accept the charge by the organization to go forward in their leadership journey.
- Establish personal accountability for continued leadership development.

### Topics Include:

Leadership Journey Plan Showcase