



**ADAMS 14
EDUCATION**
FOUNDATION

LEADERSHIP ——— **COMMERCE CITY**

CLASS OF 2025-2026
COURSEBOOK





Introduction

Vision: Every Commerce City public, private, business, and non-profit organization will work together to advance community leadership development in Commerce City.

Leadership Commerce City is a local civic leadership development program that cultivates knowledgeable, engaged, and connected community leaders in Commerce City, Colorado. Leadership Commerce City aims to:

- **Develop leadership skills** among emerging and established community members
- **Build knowledge of key issues** facing Commerce City, including education, government, economic development, public safety, and community services
- **Foster connections** between participants, local leaders, and institutions
- **Promote civic engagement** by encouraging graduates to serve on local boards, volunteer, and take active roles in the community

Leadership Commerce City was modeled after Leadership Aurora, but tailored to the unique needs and demographics of Commerce City and is a program of the Adams 14 Education Foundation. Participants include nonprofit professionals, business leaders, educators, residents, and public sector employees committed to the city's growth and vitality.

History of LCC

With support from the City of Commerce City, community leaders, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and their Leadership Aurora program, Leadership Commerce City has been established to offer a unique perspective on the community. This program provides networking opportunities, educational experiences, and leadership training for individuals who live, work, and serve in Commerce City.



Leadership Commerce City launches and graduates its inaugural class of 2015-16. Many students went on to become elected officials and community leaders.

2015

Leadership Commerce City completes its **9th** year, graduating over **120** civic, community and business leaders.

2025



Program Overview

Leadership Commerce City is a civic leadership development program designed to equip individuals with the skills, knowledge, and connections needed to lead effectively in their community. The program offers participants the opportunity to explore key issues facing Commerce City through immersive learning, site visits, and dialogue with influential leaders.

The 2025-26 cohort will engage in a structured series of sessions that explore sectors including government, education, public safety, economic development, and community services.

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of the program, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate increased knowledge of local governance, institutions, and public policy processes
- Identify major social, economic, and civic challenges facing Commerce City
- Apply leadership principles to real-world community contexts
- Build collaborative networks with peers and civic leaders
- Explore opportunities for board service, volunteerism, and civic engagement

Program Highlights

- **Opening Retreat:** A full-day retreat focused on leadership development, group cohesion, and personal reflection
- **Monthly Learning Sessions:** Thematic sessions held at key locations across the city (e.g., City Hall, Police Department, schools, nonprofit hubs)
- **Leadership Panels:** Candid discussions with elected officials, educators, business leaders, and community organizers
- **Group Project:** A collaborative civic initiative addressing a real community need
- **Graduation Ceremony:** Recognition event celebrating participant achievement and future engagement

Terms of Course & Participant Guidelines

All participants are expected to uphold the following standards during the program:

Professional Conduct

- Engage respectfully and thoughtfully in discussions
- Represent yourself and your organization with integrity
- Abide by all rules at host sites and events

Confidentiality

- Respect the confidentiality of sensitive discussions and participant contributions
- Do not record or publicly share personal or identifying information from sessions without permission

Collaboration & Engagement

- Actively participate in group work and cohort activities
- Maintain open-mindedness and a willingness to learn from diverse perspectives

Use of Materials

- Course content, presentations, and materials are for educational use only and may not be reproduced for commercial purposes without written consent

Attendance Policies

To accomplish Leadership Commerce City's objectives, to maintain the integrity of the cohort model, the following attendance expectations are necessary:

- **Program Tuition:** Due upon acceptance into the program.
 - Community Member – \$125.00
 - Charitable 501c3 Non-Profit – \$195.00
 - Government or District – \$250.00
 - Business or Corporation – \$495.00
- **Mandatory Attendance:** Participants are expected to attend all sessions in full.
- **Absence Limit:** No more than 2 (two) *excused* absences will be allowed. Missing more than two sessions will result in removal from the program.
- **Punctuality:** Participants must arrive on time and stay for the duration of each session.
- **Communication:** If an unavoidable conflict arises, participants must notify program staff in advance.
- **Refunds and Transfers:** Tuition is the responsibility of the class participant. If you are unable to complete the class, your tuition is non-transferable and non-refundable.

Application Process

1. Before you apply, please review the class outline and attendance policy to determine if you can commit to completing the entire 10-month Leadership Commerce City Program.
2. Apply and submit the **\$50 application fee** by Friday, August 8, 2025.
3. Interviews will be conducted by members of the Leadership Commerce City Committee between August 18–22, 2025 by Zoom.
4. An email notification will be sent out regarding acceptance by August 25, 2025.
5. Sign the Leadership Commerce City Contract and submit the remainder of your tuition payment to complete your acceptance into Leadership Commerce City. Your tuition fee helps cover the cost of facilitators, breakfast, lunch, snacks, and transportation.

Please contact Lori Young (lori.young@adams14.org) if you need to cancel your application and tuition. Cancellation deadlines and policies will apply.

2025–2026 Class Schedule

8:30 am – 4:00pm

Friday, September 5	Leadership Retreat
Friday, October 3	Non-Profits
Friday, November 7	Meet the City
Friday, December 5	Economic Development
Friday, January 9	Water, Environment and Energy
Thursday , February 5	Civic Day at the State Capitol
Friday, March 6	School Disricts 27J and Adams 14
Friday, April 3	Public Safety
Friday, May 1	Quality of Life
Friday, June 5	Past, Present and Future
Friday, June 12	Graduation

Leadership Retreat

Description

- Learn about the Leadership Commerce City course and expectations.
- Introductions and team-building activities



Class Leaders:
Randall Weigum
Lori Young

Participant Learning Objective

- Welcome and Introductions
- LCC Program Overview
- Team Building and Leadership Development
- Discussion and Election of Class Officers

Non-Profits

Description

Class members will have the opportunity to learn about the diverse nature of our community. Participants will be introduced to an array of support services and organizations in our neighborhoods dedicated to meeting the wide- ranging needs of our area residents.

A true leadership challenge is building and strengthening the community in which we work and live. How we collectively foster our individual potential and work to address the needs of our residents will significantly impact their lives as well as our own.

Class Leaders:

Whitney Gustin-Connor
Lori Young

Participant Learning Objectives

By the end of the day, class members will:

1. Learn about Commerce City non-profit organizations.
2. Have actionable steps toward planning the class capstone project.
3. Learn about volunteer and board opportunities within Commerce City.

MEET THE CITY

Description

- You'll learn about the City of Commerce City's government, organization and operations.
- You'll meet city council members and city staff and hear about their roles in running the city.

Class Leaders:

Garrett Anderson
Lori Young

Participant Learning Objectives

At the end of the day, class members will be able to:

1. Learn how the City serves its residents and stakeholders.
2. Learn how input from Residents is translated into action by City staff.
3. Understand how residents can provide input and make a difference.

Economic Development

Description

You'll meet local small, medium and large business owners in Commerce City and learn about their contribution to local economic development.

You'll meet Commerce City and Adams County's Economic Development teams.

Class Leaders:
Garrett Anderson
Lori Young

Participant Learning Objectives

At the end of the day, class members will:

1. Learn how Economic Development impacts residents and business owners.
2. Learn the Economic Development process in Commerce City and Adams County.
3. Participate in discussions and activities to advance learning about Economic Development.

Water, Environment & Energy

Description

Commerce City has a wealth of natural resources within its municipal borders. Water and energy continue to be a big part of the discussion. Quality, availability, safety, softness, and uses are some of the leading discussions.

Class Leaders:

South Adams County Water
Suncor
Rocky Mountain Recycling

Participant Learning Objectives

By the end of the day, class members will:

1. Learn about the history and services provided by the South Adams County Water and Sanitation District
2. Understand the leadership skills needed to manage environmental resources and balance community growth.
3. Explore other facilities that impact Commerce City's water and energy resources.

Civic Day at the State Capitol

Description

Civic Day will be held at the state capital. This session will introduce participants to the important links between state and federal government to municipal operations and the development of a vibrant community.

Class Leaders:

City of Commerce City
State House of Representative
State Senator

Participant Learning Objectives

By the end of the day, class members will:

1. Understand how the federal and state legislative process works.
2. Recognize the interconnectedness among the various levels of government.
3. Meet state legislators, the executive branch, and federal representatives.

School Districts 27J and Adams 14

Description

Strong public education is one of the best drivers of future economic growth. As leaders in the Commerce City community, it is important to understand the vital role our schools play in preparing all students to successfully compete in the local and global workforce.

School Districts Adams 14 and 27J reflect the communities they serve and shape. You will tour and learn about each school district, interact with students and staff, and gain a first-hand knowledge of the important opportunities and challenges in education today.

Class Leaders:

Joseph Hermacillo
Ron Hruby
Leah Gorowicz

Participant Learning Objectives

By the end of the day, class members will:

1. Meet the leadership teams at Adams 14 and 27J School Districts.
2. Experience K-12 educational programs in each of Commerce City's school districts.
3. Learn how Adams 14 and 27J prepare students for post-secondary educational programs and post-graduation opportunities.

Public Safety

Description

A variety of Public Safety agencies play a role in keeping the Commerce City community safe. Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the operations and opportunities facing the city's police department and the South Adams County Fire District.

Participants will learn about the unique leadership challenges facing first responders through facility tours and hands-on experiences.

Class Leaders:

South Adams County Fire Department
ADCOM
Commerce City Police Department

Participant Learning Objectives

By the end of the day, class members will:

1. Understand how public safety services are provided among various agencies and regional partners
2. Learn about the history of the South Adams County Fire District, the District's role in the community, and understand the changes to the modern-day fire department
3. Learn about the services provided by the Commerce City Police Department, the organization's history, and today's policing challenges.

Quality of Life

Description

Explore the many aspects of Commerce City Park, Recreation and Golf, including Buffalo Run Golf Course, Rocky Mountain Wildlife Refuge and the many parks and recreation sites around the city.

Class Leaders:

Lisa Nordholt
Commerce City Parks, Recreation
and Golf

Participant Learning Objectives

By the end of the day, class members will:

1. Better understand the outstanding activities available in Commerce City
2. Learn about the behind-the-scenes operations of the Parks, Recreation and Golf department.

Past, Present and Future

Description

This session will focus on the history of Commerce City as it relates to energy and development. From there the class will tour parts of the city including the Core city and the Northern Range.

Class Leaders:

Commerce City
Historical Society

Participant Learning Objectives

By the end of the day, class members will:

1. Learn about the history of Commerce City.
2. learn about the city's historic landmarks, schools, businesses and neighborhoods.
3. Learn about the development and growth leadership decisions through previous community leaders.



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THANK YOU
APPLY TODAY



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