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Developing Leadership to Serve Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Rural Communities

June 1, 2023

LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. (LEAD) is accepting applications for its next cohort of Fellowship Program participants, LEAD Class XIII. This class participates in 2024-25. Completed applications are due by the end of the day **October 1, 2023**.

All application materials are available at www.leadmaryland.org or <http://extension.umd.edu/lead-maryland>. LEAD Class XIII application materials include:

- A. Application Brochure;
- B. Program Information, which includes program participation benefits;
- C. Calendar;
- D. Application, a web-based form completed and submitted online;
- E. Statement of Understanding and Code of Ethics (signature required);
- F. Reference Form (3 references required).

There are many benefits to participating in the LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program. We hope you will consider applying by the October 1, 2023, due date.

Please contact me directly if you need more information or assistance. Thank you for your efforts in making the leadership development program a success!

Sincerely,

Susan

Susan R. Harrison
Executive Director, LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.
Principal Agent Associate, University of Maryland Extension



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LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program Information

Summary of Program Benefits

The LEAD Maryland Fellowship is a two-year leadership development program offering participants numerous benefits that are realized for a lifetime. Over the course of the structured program, Fellows learn various leadership skills: public speaking; addressing the media; how to respond to and lead legislative initiatives on the local, state, and national levels; personal growth through self-assessments and new experiences; how to use diversity to strengthen teams, and more. Fellows will also develop a broader and keener awareness of issues facing agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities, and can apply their leadership skills to promote their businesses, industries, communities, and Maryland's rural sector, for the benefit of the future.

Application to the LEAD Maryland Program (LEAD) is an entrance into a new lifelong opportunity to be actively and positively engaged in agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities.

Benefits for the individual participant

- See yourself as a leader. Become a life-long learner and leader.
- Meet new people from your community, industry, Maryland, the nation and abroad;
- Expand professional networks—the number and diversity of people you can call on to help solve problems and to promote your industry, community, and state;
- Learn more about Maryland; meet local and regional leaders; better understand some of Maryland's history and heritage; better understand what shapes our future;
- Gain leadership skills to confidently share ideas, address issues, build partnerships, help shape policy, and to solve problems;
- Learn about new technologies, markets, industry and community initiatives, and programs.
- Learn new perspectives; expand greater self-awareness, value systems, and beliefs; See your industry or your community, and Maryland, differently or more clearly;
- Learn communication skills to help you speak to diverse audiences of all sizes, to work with the media, to give a speech of public testimony, and to work more productively in group settings;

Benefits to employers, co-workers, industry and community

- Prepares emerging leaders to embrace greater responsibilities at their place of work, within their organizations and industry;
- Fellows gain skills to better understand themselves and others in their work environment, and to find greater value in working with diverse teams;

- Creates professional networks, contacts, and other new resources to solve problems;
- Equips participants to understand different views of complex issues, to better identify and understand new trends, and respond to or lead changes;
- Motivates participants to connect their organization, community, industry, or government with others to meet common goals;
- Fellows educate others about the importance of their work and industry;
- Provide a higher level of training and unique experiences that most organizations and employers could not provide working alone;
- Increases self-confidence to influence change.

Eligibility and Selection Requirements

Eligibility Requirements: To be considered for a LEAD Maryland Fellowship, applicants must have the following qualifications:

- Applicants must be a resident of Maryland for at least two years.

(Residents of neighboring states and Washington DC may apply and be accepted into the program based on individual situations. These applicants may be working in the agriculture, rural, or natural resources sectors within Maryland, or leading a Maryland organization or agency serving or affecting those same sectors.)
- The ability to be away from work, families, and other activities or responsibilities. Applicants must have the ability to give the time required of the LEAD Program.
- The willingness to travel throughout Maryland, the nation, and internationally.
- Applicants must have leadership potential and have careers or activities in or related to agriculture, food systems, natural resources, or rural communities.
- Selected applicants must have demonstrated emerging leadership abilities as well as a genuine interest in societal issues. Though leadership and service in the work place are positive, applicants are to be interested in and dedicated to leadership and service beyond normal or regular employment activities.
- All applicants must submit:
 - A completed application form (submitted electronically by October 1, 2023);
 - A signed Statement of Understanding and Code of Ethics. Please read the Statement of Understanding and Code of Ethics thoroughly before signing. (A copy will be available on-line with the application for your signature.)
- Applicants are required to ask three people to submit references. A reference form is available. Letters of reference are acceptable, too, and may be delivered, mailed, or sent by email to < leadmd@umd.edu >. Letter of reference may be mailed to: LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. 124 Wye Narrows Drive, Queenstown, MD 21658. References are also due October 1, 2023.
- Applications must be submitted through the electronic form. A receipt message is provided to all applicants submitting the completed electronic form.

- Applications are due October 1, 2023. Only the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board of Directors can meet and vote to formally extend the application deadline. Should the application deadline be extended, notice will be posted on LEAD's website (www.leadmaryland.org). The online application form will automatically close at the end of the day October 1, 2023, and will remain closed (unless the Board formally extends the deadline date).

LEAD does not allow direct family members to be in the same class. This would include spouses, siblings and parents/children.

Tuition/fee is \$4,800: Applicants must have the ability to pay the \$4,800 tuition (participation fee) by the designated due dates. Tuition may be paid in part or fully in advance of the due dates. One fourth of the tuition (\$1,200) is due on each of the following dates, for a total of \$4,800 to be paid:

Due Dates	Payments Due
February 1, 2024	\$1,200
June 1, 2024	\$1,200
November 1, 2024	\$1,200
April 1, 2025	\$1,200
Total	\$4,800

Each Fellow will receive an invoice for the tuition. Payment by check is preferred.

Sometimes LEAD Maryland Fellows depend on financial support or scholarships (financial assistance) from employers, organizations, or other sources to pay for all or some of the tuition fee. The LEAD Maryland Foundation, with support from the Rural Maryland Foundation, the MD Cattlemen's Association, and other individuals, has a scholarship program.

(Note: An estimated \$25,000 is invested into each Fellow for completion of the Fellowship Program. Of that \$25,000, each Fellow is responsible for paying \$4,800 in tuition.)

Payment of the tuition/fee is not a charitable contribution to the Foundation.

Relationship to Sponsors and Foundation Granters: The LEAD Program is provided through a collaborative effort. The LEAD Maryland Foundation and the University of Maryland Extension and many other organizations, businesses, and individuals work to plan, implement, evaluate, and fund the Fellowship Program, its curriculum and activities. We are grateful for the many program partners and individuals who invest into the success of the LEAD Program.

Because the most successful LEAD class is diverse and balanced, there is no fair way to promise program partners/funders that any of their nominated applicants, employees, clients, or otherwise endorsed applicants will be accepted into the program at any given time. LEAD strives to have half of each class be representative of farmers, growers, producers.

Should an employer or agency want to support only a limited number of employees or organizational members to be in a LEAD class at any one time, it is up to the employer or organization to communicate their internal plans with employees. Employees are encouraged to speak with their employers before submitting an application.

The LEAD Maryland Foundation expects that each applicant has obtained appropriate support from family and employers to participate in the program, and has confirmed this support prior to submitting the application.

The LEAD Maryland Foundation Board uses submitted applications, supplied references, and personal interviews to select applicants.

Should an applicant have concerns about possible or likely attendance issues, or conflicts with other known commitments, applicants need to discuss their individual situation at the time of applicant interviews, or apply in a future round when a better attendance commitment can be made.

Selection Criteria: In addition to the eligibility requirements, the following criteria are considered in the selection of applicants to be in the LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program. Applicants should have:

- A commitment to a bright future for Maryland agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities;
- An interest in learning about public policies that affect agriculture, natural resources, local communities, our rural families, Maryland, the United States of America, and our world;
- A willingness to share knowledge and experiences with class members and others;
- A willingness to travel throughout Maryland, the nation, and internationally, and to obtain a passport and visa(s) as may be needed for program travel.
- Selected applicants must have demonstrated emerging leadership abilities and/or willingness to set personal goals for learning, improving, and applying skills.
- Though all people have room for additional growth, applicants who may already be “well-rounded” and active leaders with exceptional combinations of educational, travel, work, and leadership responsibilities, roles, opportunities and experiences, will not rank as high in the selection process. Applicants who are seen as needing more support, more access, and more opportunities for leadership training and personal growth will rank higher. The “well-rounded” applicants might otherwise find themselves in a program where they are teaching and sharing much more than they are learning and stretching to a higher level. Current strong and experienced leaders will not displace emerging leaders from being selected for the LEAD class.
- Applicants need to be 20 years of age or older. There are no formal education requirements. With that said, much of the curriculum is geared towards mid-career people who have a depth of work and life experiences to contribute to discussions for the benefit of the class. Having a wide range of ages in a class positively adds to the diversity of the class. Fellows must have an ability and willingness to teach and share, at the same time, they must have maturity and readiness to learn, grow, and change to become leaders. Ideal applicants have a good mix of “life experiences” and a level of skills or knowledge to be able to teach or share with others.
- The selection committee does not recommend applicants who seek to use program participation primarily as a resume builder, as a way to enhance employment work plans, or as a way to redirect careers.
- **LEAD does not teach people how to farm. The LEAD class will have visits and tours during seminars that may include visiting a diversity of farm and agricultural operations, as well visits to many other places—businesses, government offices, nonprofits, rural and urban communities, and more.**

Selection Process: The selection process is the responsibility of the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board of Directors. The Board appoints a Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will review and screen all applications, hold interviews and contact references for all finalists as needed, and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. The final selection, including class size, rests with the Board.

Completed forms or letters of reference or recommendation are accepted. Efforts to “lobby” or influence the work of the Selection Committee or Board members are never acceptable.

The maximum and ideal class size will be 20-25 participants. Qualified applicants not accepted due to class size or class balance, and who remain eligible, will be encouraged to reapply for a future class. Many Fellows successfully graduating from past LEAD classes have had to apply more than once to be named to a LEAD class. For most, having applied a second time ultimately served to be a good fit and timing for the Fellow as well as for the good of the entire class.

LEAD is looking for participants from all regions of Maryland with diversity in occupations, education, perspectives, and experiences, as well as participants who will both contribute to the class and gain from being in the class.

Examples of work or service areas of LEAD Program Fellows:

- Farmers, growers, producers from all areas—urban, suburban, and rural production agriculture;
- Food industry, food services, processing, sourcing, distribution, and sales;
- Agribusiness, consulting, sales and services, education, communications, energy, science and research, technology, government, advocacy work, marketing, land use, land zoning, conservation, transportation, finance, law, insurance, finance, organizational management, economic development, nonprofits, and agri-tourism;
- Watermen/women, seafood, fisheries, aquaculture.
- Natural resources and the environment—water resources, forestry and forest products, wildlife, conservation, energy, environmental work, land use;
- Rural communities—rural services, rural development: rural health, infrastructure, communications, transportation, education, economic development, tourism; community action groups, local government, and programs serving families, youth, seniors, minorities, and disadvantaged people.

Those involved with various aspects of production agriculture, food, aquaculture, forest products, ornamental horticulture, and equine are especially encouraged to apply. There is a goal to have half of the class be representative of production agriculture (farmers, growers, producers, watermen/women, aquaculture, foresters, and so forth).

LEAD’s definition of agriculture is as broad as possible, including, for examples: production of forest products, aquaculture, fisheries, all aspects of the equine industry, greenhouse and nursery production, arboriculture, sod/turfgrass, honey bees, wine grapes, fruits, vegetables, dairy, livestock, agri-tourism, grain, poultry, hay and forages, organic crops and products, and value-added food/farm products.

Description of Program Calendar

The LEAD Maryland Foundation's leadership development program is a two-year fellowship consisting of a series of multi-day seminars held in locations throughout Maryland and Washington, D.C.



Study Tour: Fellows complete a study tour. A dictionary definition of “study tour” is “a visit to a country or an area in which you go to different places and have lectures and classes.” The destination(s) is (are) determined by the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board after the class has completed a two or three seminars.

The Foundation's leadership looks at international, domestic, or combined international and domestic travel options. The study tours are a signature activity of LEAD's program curriculum, and the Foundation has a team of people who plan and fund exceptional educational tours. Whether the travel is international or domestic, there are high expectations for LEAD to provide meaningful learning experiences. Possible international and/or domestic tour destinations for Class XIII (2024-2025) have not been determined to date. Program travel guidelines consider health and safety, educational value, program budgets, current events, as well as input from others (input from Class Fellows, program alumni, university and industry leaders, and sister programs around the nation and around the world, professional travel operators, government offices), will be used to determine travel destinations and travel dates.

Full participation is important and expected.

Program leaders realize that depending on each person's responsibilities, there may be times of the year that are more demanding. A schedule of seminars has been put together knowing that most all participants will need to make adjustments to attend all seminars and the study tour. Full participation is important and expected.

LEAD Maryland class participants are Fellows.

The LEAD Maryland Foundation awards this Fellowship to each selected participant. By definition, a Fellowship is a scholarship awarded in an academic program. LEAD Maryland Foundation is not an accredited degree-granting institution, but is an educational public charity with an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit designation, with a mission of identifying and developing leadership to serve agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. Though the word “fellowship” has many meanings, including “a union of friends,” the most applicable definition for the LEAD Program is **“a graduate level instruction to students in a learning environment.”** The LEAD Fellowship Program, provided in partnership of the LEAD Maryland Foundation and the University of Maryland Extension (UME), is a UME Signature Program.

LEAD is about providing:

- Leadership education, different ways to define service leadership, is and how to serve as a leader;
- Public issues and policy development education;
- Personal growth and leadership development opportunities;
- Communications and problem-solving skills training;
- Support, direction, and resources, for people who are choosing to become servant leaders in the agricultural, natural resources, and/or rural community sectors.

LEAD Maryland Seminars

Seminars are planned and implemented to deliver the LEAD Fellowship curriculum. Seminars allow Fellows to have discussions and work with classmates and topic-experts to develop subject understanding, communication skills, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Seminars also include field visits. Field visits are to a variety of locations, including a diversity of farms, but also to many other places such as businesses, community centers, nonprofits, and government offices.

Eleven (11) multi-day seminars are implemented within the two-year program. Seminars are structured as two-day, three-day, or four-day seminars. Please see the LEAD Class XIII Calendar document for details.

Classes are held during the week, not weekends. All seminars will start on a Tuesday. Depending on the seminar, it will end on a Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. Seminars start mid-mornings or late-mornings, and conclude early- afternoons or mid-afternoons. Seminar details are provided prior to the seminars to assist everyone in their planning.

For the seminar held in Western Maryland in June 2024, Fellows are asked to arrive Monday evening to begin the seminar early Tuesday morning. The seminars in Annapolis and Washington DC begin Tuesday and end Friday. Please see the Class XIII Calendar for details.

During the seminars, most meals are provided by the LEAD Maryland Foundation. There may be meals during the seminars that are “on your own and at your own expense.”

Seminar days can be long days, with breakfasts starting at 7:00 a.m., and the evening dinner or tour programs concluding at or after 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. Short breaks are provided throughout the day. Full attendance and participation are expected throughout the seminar.

There is an attempt to keep the seminars as enjoyable, light and fun as possible while the group learns about important topics and skills. The LEAD Program will mix and vary the teaching techniques used (lecture, tours and field visits, role playing, discussions, readings, assessments, hands-on learning, journaling, class-led presentations, etc.). The program provides many opportunities, but it will be up to the individual on how best to utilize the training, networking opportunities, subject information, and leadership examples.

Leadership skills and discussions will be included within most seminars. LEAD will also offer more about the economics, history, leaders, agriculture, natural resources, and perspectives of current issues of the region hosting the seminar.

The LEAD Fellowship Program does not teach people how to farm.

While the LEAD Program draws largely on people from the rural, natural resources, and agricultural sectors, the program itself goes beyond these themes. By participating in the program, participants can refine their leadership skills, expand greater self-awareness, increase their understanding of the public policy process, and expand their networks and perspectives of the world outside of—as well as relating to—production agriculture.

LEAD will use case studies and field visits to help the class learn about many topics. For example, an introduction to Maryland’s ornamental horticulture industry can demonstrate current issues and examples of problem solving related to production, marketing, risk management, weather impacts, labor and management, transportation, land use, conservation,

nutrient management, research, regulations, economic impact, industry leadership, succession planning, and so forth. Though production/farm visits during LEAD seminars are always enjoyable and very popular, **Fellows will not be visiting all types of production operations or systems, and there will be field visits to many places that are not farms, in both rural and urban settings.**

Participation

Fellows need to commit a minimum of 45 days to participate in the program. (This is an estimate, counting days starting from the day an applicant interviews with the Selection Committee, to completing the series of seminars, a study tour, and graduation.) You will need time to prepare and organize to be ready to participate and be at your best during the seminars. Please have home and work obligations met or covered to minimize distractions during the seminars.

Study Tour: Please plan on eight to fourteen (8-14) days for a study tour, depending on the travel destination(s) and organizational budget restrictions.

(Projects: Some past classes completed individual, small group, or full class leadership projects. Such projects are **not** anticipated or planned for Class XIII, allowing Fellows to have more time for other curriculum delivery and class participation.)

Having and using an operational email address is vital, or Fellows will miss important information regarding seminar schedules, instructions, driving directions, and general updates. Seminar information is sent electronically through email (not social media, not text messages or other phone apps, not postal mail). There may be assigned short article readings, self-assessments, project work, or studying outside of the seminars.

Fellows need access to web-based meeting platforms, such as Zoom. Class XIII seminars are in-person and on-site, but there may be occasions where the class will use Zoom. There may occasionally be a speaker during the in-person seminars who presents to the class remotely over Zoom.

Assessments and Evaluations: Fellows are asked to complete assessments and evaluations. Because program evaluation is important to make curriculum improvements and to help measure the value of the program, all Fellows are expected to complete assessments, evaluations, and surveys in a timely manner upon request.

Dress for the seminars is commonly **business casual**, but there are times when **business dress** is more appropriate. During some outdoor activities or tours, **casual attire** works best.

(Please see information from business etiquette sources, such as <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice> or <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/dress-code> to learn more about appropriate attire definitions and examples.)

Some tours may require **closed-toe shoes, waterproof boots, comfortable walking shoes**, or other requirements. Information about what to expect during the seminar is provided ahead of time to help you in packing and planning.

Details of each seminar are emailed to Fellows a minimum of two weeks prior to the seminar.

For more immediate planning purposes, please use the provided Class XIII Calendar as a planning guide. Seminars are described in very broad terms and more detailed curriculum objectives will be shared with the class prior to each seminar.

Seminars are held throughout the state and Washington DC. As all regions of Maryland are important and offer valuable resources to LEAD Fellows, every attempt is made to move the seminars to as many regions of the state as time allows. Each LEAD class will have a different seminar schedule to help the program reach more places in the state over time.

The LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. is dedicated to identifying and developing leadership to serve agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. The LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. is a public charity and has been granted tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code.

The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to all and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, or natural origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, or gender identity and expression.

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