

Leadership Academy FAQs – 2023

It is the mission of the ACC NCR Leadership Academy to equip in-house lawyers with leadership skills necessary to best serve their organizations and the community by providing world-class training and fostering connection, development, and belonging in the legal community.

What is the ACC NCR Leadership Academy?

The Leadership Academy is a robust, cohort-based leadership development program geared specifically to in-house counsel. The Academy consists of an orientation, an "intro" session, and eight faculty-led Modules. The entire Academy program takes place over a 12-month period.

The Academy curriculum was developed by in-house counsel *for in-house counsel* to provide the skills necessary to become a trusted advisor and leader and to navigate the partner/guardian balance inherent in the in-house counsel role.

The Academy is designed to improve every in-house counsel's ability to "lead from any seat." Strong candidates for the Academy have a real desire to develop their leadership potential and apply those skills to their roles in their departments, in a working group, or on a cross-disciplinary team. While the Academy teaches skills that would benefit attorneys who aspire to higher-level positions, including the General Counsel role, it is *not* just for GCs-in-waiting. Team members who go through the Academy program will give depth to the organization's leadership bench, and be well positioned to "pay it forward" by applying their learnings directly to their day-to-day roles.

To learn more, read the [Program Overview](#).

What will I learn as an Academy Fellow?

Fellows will develop core self-management, relationship management, and leadership skills through the Academy's sessions on:

- Developing a personal leadership brand
- Being authentic, inclusive and connected -- leadership fundamentals
- Emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication
- Building and leading high performing teams
- Creating organizational vision and inspiring stakeholders
- Leading and managing change
- Managing difficult conversations and influencing stakeholders
- Problem-solving and strategic decision-making
- Presentation skills
- Task management and delegating

How are classes structured?

There will be a class of approximately 30 participants – known as Fellows – selected from a variety of industries and organizations from across the National Capital Region. Each Fellow will also collaborate with a smaller working group (“cohort”) to optimize learning and support one another’s professional growth and development.

Each session will be highly interactive, teaching skills through a variety of approaches including: simulation; role-play and modeling; collaboration and exchange of best practices; dialogue with experts from an array of fields; case studies; and other cohort and personal exercises.

In-depth class discussions will be led by [Faculty](#) chosen for their expertise in leadership and their ability to translate concepts into practical takeaways. Members of the Academy [Board of Advisors](#) - senior lawyers, general counsel, and chief legal officers from a broad array of companies and organizations across the National Capital Region - contribute to the discussions and instruction.

Between sessions, Fellows will be expected to read, engage in personal reflection and complete specific exercises on their own and with their cohort.

How will the program benefit me?

You will develop your ability to lead through a best-in-class program geared specifically to in-house counsel. Through the ACC National Capital Region Leadership Academy, you will:

- Set, benchmark and work toward your personal growth and leadership objectives.
- Develop the skills and tools to succeed at the highest levels of your organization, including:
 - Honing your ability to communicate across teams and with members of the C-suite.
 - Contributing to, developing, and leading high-performing teams.
 - Creating organizational vision and inspiring stakeholders.
 - Leading and managing change.
 - Applying best practices for problem-solving and decision-making.
 - Becoming a trusted advisor, able to navigate the partner/guardian balance inherent in the in-house role.
- Build strong professional relationships and expand your network across an array of industries and organizations here in the National Capital Region.

How will my participation in the Academy benefit my organization?

You are a successful lawyer with innate intelligence, a strong knowledge base and skills you have developed through your professional experiences. But that's not enough to make you the trusted advisor that the business units, senior leadership team, and the board of directors need. Many very talented lawyers have never received training to develop the skills necessary to be impactful business partners within their organizations. The Leadership Academy curriculum teaches those skills, growing your ability to communicate at an executive level, lead and contribute to high-performing teams, execute on the department's and organization's vision, manage change, solve problems, and support effective decision-making.

Need to explain the value of the Academy to your organization? We've created a [customizable letter and "Make the Case" document to help you get its support.](#)

How will sponsoring a team member benefit my organization?

As a general counsel, chief legal officer, senior manager, or senior colleague, you want to provide talented members of your team -- or encourage them to pursue -- opportunities to develop professional skills that will bring them career satisfaction and enhance their value to your organization.:

- Build your leadership bench and improve performance of your team with proven leadership training.
- Deliver meaningful professional development that will enhance your team's overall performance and enable the lawyers to "lead from any seat."
- Help a member of your team boost their engagement and set personal growth objectives.
- Invest in those who have a proven ability and a desire to excel.

The ACC NCR Leadership Academy is:

- Specifically tailored to provide the next generation of in-house counsel leaders the skills to enhance their value to your organization.
- Developed by in-house counsel for in-house counsel, with engagement and input from our distinguished Board of Advisors, to ensure focus on the challenges and opportunities unique to in-house practice.
- Taught locally by nationally recognized faculty, affording the highest caliber development opportunity, without added travel time or expense.
- Designed to provide in-depth development and learning, with minimal disruption to your organization. The Academy takes place over a 12-month period and consists of two half-days (Orientation and Intro Module) and nine full program days
- Focused on developing concrete and practical skills. The program will include personal benchmarking and goal-setting, a leadership assessment, and two personal coaching sessions aimed at ensuring attainment of articulated growth objectives.
- Provided in a format that includes cohort engagement outside of the classroom to optimize and reinforce the key takeaways from the instructor-led sessions.

When and where will the program be?

The Academy takes place over a 12-month period and consists of two half-days (Orientation and Intro Module) and nine full program days. All sessions are held in-person in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, with a Zoom option for those who cannot be on-site -- unless conditions (public health, weather, etc.) require that they be held virtually. There also is work between sessions that Fellows will do individually and/or with their cohorts.

A 360-assessment process, debrief of the results, and a coaching session will be completed over the summer preceding the start of each class's sessions.

The schedule of sessions for the Class of 2023 is:

- Orientation -- October 2022 (half-day)
- Intro Module: Developing a personal leadership brand – November 2022 (half-day)
- Module 1: Authentic, inclusive, and connected -- fundamentals of being a leader – January 2023 (two-days)
- Module 2 - Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Communication: early March 2023 (one day)
- Module 3 - Developing and Leading a High-Performing Team: late March 2023 (one day)
- Module 4 - Creating and Inspiring Vision; Leading and Managing Change: late April 2023 (one day)
- Module 5 - Managing Difficult Conversations and Influencing Stakeholders: late May 2023 (one day)
- Module 6 - Problem Solving and Decision Making: late June 2023 (one day)
- Module 7 - Presentation Skills: late July 2023 (one day)
- Module 8 Capstone - My Journey Toward Leadership Mastery: late September 2023 (one day)

A similar schedule will be followed for the Class of 2024.

Full-day sessions run between the hours of 8:30 and 4:30 p.m. If a session is held virtually, the day will be shorter.

Who is eligible to apply?

To qualify for the Academy, you generally must have:

- Practiced law for a minimum of seven years, and
- Practiced in-house for a minimum of two years

as of September of the year prior to the start of the Academy year. If a candidate does not have the minimums noted above, equivalent experience may be considered in limited instances.

In-house counsel at various stages in their careers have found the Academy relevant and beneficial. The first six Academy classes have contained a comparable number of Fellows with 7 to 15 years' of legal experience and 16-25 years of legal experience, and some who are already in the GC role.

Candidates must also be ACC members or be [eligible for ACC membership](#) to participate in the Academy. Preference will be given to applicants who are [ACC NCR](#) chapter members. If you are not a member of ACC, you can join by [clicking here](#). If you are a non-member at the time of selection, the cost of one year's membership in ACC and ACC NCR is added to the member tuition fee.

We seek Fellows from a broad range of industries and non-profit organizations, as well as a mix of large and small legal departments, to optimize the opportunity for you to learn from one another, both in the classroom and in smaller cohort settings.

Wondering if the Academy is right for you or want to ask questions of an alum to get a better idea of what the experience is really like? Send an e-mail to Ilene Reid (Ilene.Reid-NCR@accglobal.com) and we will put you in contact with an alum. We urge you to read the about the commitment Fellows agree to when they enroll, which helps ensure that cohorts and the class as a whole will benefit from consistent participation and engagement -- see the FAQ below.

How do I apply? When are applications due?

The Class of 2023 is full.

Applications for the Class of 2024 will be posted on the Academy website on or about February 1, 2023. Completed applications submitted on or before March 1 will receive priority review. Applications received after March 1 will be considered on a rolling basis. The application form will be found at this URL: <https://accnrcleadershipacademy.com/apply/>.

A completed application requires:

- Your résumé.
- Answers to all required questions in the application form.
- Three personal statements pertaining to your experience and interest in the Leadership Academy. There is also one optional -- but encouraged -- short statement regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.
- At least one (1) submitted Letter of Recommendation from one of the following individuals:
 - Your current or a recent supervisor; or
 - Your current or a recent internal business client, who works or worked in a supervisory role in your organization.You also have the option of requesting a second Letter of Recommendation to support your application.

Class size is limited, and each year we've typically had more applicants than spaces available in the program. Once the Class is full, notice will be posted on the Academy website and in the weekly chapter e-newsletter.

What does it cost?

Tuition for Class of 2024 Fellows will be \$5,500 for ACC NCR members and \$5,900 for non-members (which includes the cost of a one-year membership in ACC and ACC NCR).

In addition to the full Academy program sessions, tuition includes two assessments – an individual "360" using the Leadership Circle Profile™ tool and a behavioral styles assessment, two coaching sessions, and a one-year subscription to the Harvard Business Review.

Candidates who are not planning to self-pay the full cost of the Academy are encouraged to seek financial support from their organizations before applying. For applicants who are self-paying at least a portion of the tuition and require assistance due to financial need, limited financial aid may be available to reduce the tuition and/or a payment plan may be arranged.

Need to justify the expense of the Academy to your organization? We've created a [customizable letter and "Make the Case" document to help you get its support](#).

What is the commitment involved in participating in the Academy?

The Leadership Academy is a robust cohort-based leadership development program that will take place over a 12-month period. In addition to participating in dynamic sessions led by the Academy faculty, Fellows will engage in small group activities, both at the main sessions and in assigned “cohort” groups to prepare for sessions.

Cohort work is a critical component of the program and how much of the hands-on leadership development will be accomplished. The assigned cohorts are small, with 5-6 individuals in each, and the success of the program depends on full participation in the cohort group as well as the faculty-led sessions. A Fellow’s failure to meet their obligations to their cohort will affect their own, as well as other Fellows’, experience and learning continuity.

We estimate no more than 8-10 hours of preparation time each month and believe that the course assignments will not present an undue burden for Fellows. Unless otherwise noted, Academy sessions run a full day.

Consequently, upon acceptance to the Academy, each Fellow will be asked to acknowledge and agree as follows:

- I am committed to attending and fully participating in all Academy events, including meetings with my cohort group in between the formal Academy sessions. If a situation arises that prevents my attendance at any Academy activity, I will notify Ilene Reid as soon as I become aware of the situation. Full participation may include some or all of the following requirements: independent reading; in-person or video meeting with the cohort group between sessions; additional casework and video presentations.
- I am committed to arriving at each Academy session and cohort meeting with an open and inquiring mind, a willingness to learn and a respectful attitude towards the opinions of the other Fellows and the faculty.
- I am committed to completing all course assignments within the time frame specified by the faculty and my cohort, as appropriate, and to providing feedback on each Module and the overall program.
- I am committed to securing the necessary time away from my place of employment and other work and personal obligations in order to attend all Academy sessions (whether conducted in-person or virtually) and to arrive timely and be present for the full day of each session. I understand that this commitment will require: two (2) half-days for the Academy Orientation and Introductory Module; nine (9) full-day sessions; two (2) or three (3) evening events; and cohort meetings between sessions. If a session is held in-person, I will make every effort to attend on-site. I am committed to full engagement at each session and cohort meeting, and will minimize interruptions and distractions, including limiting or avoiding checking e-mail, taking or making calls, etc., during the active part of each session and cohort meeting. I understand that there will be limited breaks to attend to time-urgent matters.
- I have informed my professional manager and business clients (where appropriate) of these commitments.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Send an email to info@accncrleadershipacademy.com

What is ACC NCR?

ACC National Capital Region (ACC NCR) is the regional bar association for in-house lawyers in Washington, D.C., DC-suburban Maryland, and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are a chapter of the global Association of Corporate Counsel. We serve approximately 2,500 members at nearly 900 organizations throughout the region who have a diverse set of interests and needs. Thanks to the collaboration of staff, volunteer leaders, and sponsors, ACC NCR hosts more than 70 substantive legal education programs and numerous professional development, service, and networking events each year. More information about the organization can be found at www.acc.com/chapters/ncr/.