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Washington County Chamber Candidate Training Academy Acceptance & Participation Policies, Guidelines, and Expectations

Thank you for your interest in the Washington County Chamber Candidate Training Academy. We appreciate your interest in strengthening your leadership skills and exploring public service.

Purpose and Learning Environment

The Washington County Chamber Candidate Training Academy is designed to provide a welcoming, professional, and supportive learning environment for individuals exploring public service and political engagement.

The Academy is a safe space to learn, exchange ideas, and build skills related to campaigning, governance, and civic leadership. Participants are expected to engage thoughtfully, respect differing perspectives, and contribute to a collaborative learning experience.

Eligibility, Acceptance, and Continued Participation

Participation in the Candidate Training Academy is contingent upon alignment with program expectations and the values of the Washington County Chamber.

All applications will be reviewed by the Washington County Chamber. Acceptance into the Academy is not automatic and is based on the committee's evaluation of the application, the applicant's demonstrated commitment to public service, and alignment with the goals and expectations of the program.

Because the Academy is rooted in ethical leadership and public trust, integrity throughout the application and participation process is essential.

The Chamber reserves the right to:

- Deny an application if submitted if the applicant's conduct or public actions are inconsistent with the ethical standards of the Academy
- Revoke acceptance prior to the start of the program if new information arises that raises concerns related to integrity, professionalism, respect for others, or alignment with Academy expectations
- Dismiss a participant from the Academy if behavior, communication, or actions undermine the safety, trust, or collaborative learning environment of the cohort, violate program policies, or demonstrate a lack of integrity or respect for others
- Dismiss a participant for dishonesty or lack of transparency, including material misstatements, significant omissions, or knowingly misleading information shared publicly prior to or during the application process or Academy participation
- Dismiss a participant for conduct inconsistent with ethical public leadership, including harassment, discriminatory behavior, sustained disruption, intimidation, or actions that compromise the integrity of the Academy
- Determine eligibility for future Chamber programs following dismissal or significant policy violations

Inclusivity and Respect

The Washington County Chamber is committed to creating welcoming and inclusive experiences for all participants. The Academy is intended to foster an open and respectful exchange of ideas and perspectives where every participant feels included, valued, and safe.

We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate accessibility needs and individual requests. While every request may not be possible to fulfill, the Chamber will work to provide a thoughtful and respectful environment for all.

Professional Conduct and Code of Behavior

Participants are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner throughout the Academy, including during sessions, networking activities, digital communications, and any Academy-related events.

Discrimination or harassment based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, immigration status, age, religion, ability, body size, veteran status, profession, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Examples of prohibited behavior include:

- Offensive or derogatory comments or jokes
- Inappropriate physical contact or sexual attention
- Sexual imagery or language in any form of communication
- Intimidation, bullying, or sustained disruption
- Disrespectful conduct toward instructors, guest speakers, or fellow participants

This policy applies before, during, and after Academy sessions, including interactions on social media or digital platforms connected to the program.

Participants who engage in behavior inconsistent with these expectations may be removed from the Academy without refund and may be excluded from future Chamber programs.

Confidentiality and Trust

Because Academy discussions may involve personal experiences, campaign strategy considerations, or reflections on political processes, participants are expected to respect the privacy of others.

Participants agree to:

- Keep personal stories and sensitive discussions confidential
- Refrain from sharing another participant's comments or experiences without permission
- Respect that individuals may be exploring public service without having formally declared candidacy

This expectation helps foster trust and encourages open dialogue.

Constructive Dialogue and Exchange of Ideas

The Academy welcomes diverse viewpoints and encourages thoughtful discussion. Participants are expected to:

- Engage in respectful dialogue, even when disagreeing
- Listen actively and avoid interrupting or dismissing others
- Offer feedback constructively and with professionalism
- Recognize that the Academy is nonpartisan and focused on skill-building, not political advocacy

Attendance and Participation Expectations

To ensure a meaningful cohort experience, participants are expected to:

- Attend all scheduled sessions whenever possible
- Arrive prepared and on time
- Participate in discussions, exercises, and group activities
- Communicate with Chamber staff if scheduling conflicts arise

Because of the collaborative nature of the Academy, consistent attendance supports both individual learning and cohort success.

Use of Materials and Intellectual Property

Training materials, presentations, and resources provided through the Academy are intended for participant use only. Participants may reference materials for personal learning but should not reproduce or distribute content without permission from the Chamber or presenter.

Photography, Recording, and Media Consent

By participating in the Candidate Training Academy, you may be photographed or recorded for Chamber promotional purposes. Your participation constitutes consent to the use of your image, voice, and likeness across Chamber communications and media platforms.

If you prefer not to be photographed or recorded, please notify Jen Little at jenl@wcchamber.org.

Refunds and Program Cancellation

The Academy follows the Chamber's standard refund and cancellation policies. Refunds are available prior to the stated deadline. Cancellations after the deadline are not guaranteed refunds, though substitutions may be considered when appropriate.

If the Chamber cancels the program, participants may request a full refund or apply their tuition toward a future program.

Reporting Concerns or Complaints

Participants who experience or witness behavior inconsistent with these expectations should notify a Chamber staff member promptly or contact the Chamber following the session. Concerns will be handled with care, discretion, and in alignment with the Chamber's commitment to a safe and inclusive environment.

Please complete and sign the 2026 Candidate Training Academy Participant Acknowledgment and Agreement on page #4 and return to Jen Little at jenl@wcchamber.org.



2026 Candidate Training Academy Participant Acknowledgment and Agreement

The Washington County Chamber Candidate Training Academy is built on trust, professionalism, and a shared commitment to learning. Participation reflects an agreement to contribute to a respectful, collaborative, and supportive cohort experience.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the **Candidate Training Academy Policies, Guidelines, and Participant Expectations**. I agree to uphold these standards throughout my participation in the program.

Participant Commitments

I agree to:

- Engage in respectful, professional, and inclusive dialogue
- Contribute to a safe learning environment that values diverse perspectives
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of fellow participants and Academy discussions
- Follow the Policies, Guidelines, and Participant Expectations
- Participate fully and communicate with Chamber staff if attendance challenges arise
- Accept that failure to adhere to these expectations may result in removal from the program without refund

Confidentiality Affirmation

I understand that Academy discussions may include personal experiences, exploratory campaign ideas, and candid reflections. I agree to respect participants' confidentiality and not share personal comments, stories, or sensitive information without their permission.

Media and Photography Consent

The Chamber may photograph or record Candidate Training Academy sessions for promotional and educational purposes. Please select one:

☐ **I consent** to the use of my image, voice, and likeness in Chamber communications and promotional materials.

☐ **I do not consent** to photography or recording and will notify Chamber staff accordingly.

Emergency Contact Information:

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____

Participant Information and Signature:

Participant Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Submission Instructions:

Please complete, sign, and return this acknowledgment page to:

Jen Little

Vice President, Public Affairs

Washington County Chamber of Commerce

jenl@wcchamber.org

Washington County Chamber Candidate Training Academy

Policies, Guidelines, and Participant Expectations