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Purpose of Leadership DeSoto Program:

Leadership DeSoto is designed to develop individuals into stronger, more effective leaders by combining professional skill-building with real-world experiences throughout DeSoto County. Participants gain practical leadership skills they can apply in their workplace, direct exposure to local businesses, government, and community organizations, and a deeper understanding of how the community operates and grows. The program also fosters meaningful connections with other leaders and decision-makers, creating a network that extends beyond the classroom. Leadership DeSoto is built for businesses and individuals who want to invest in leadership development that produces confident, informed, and engaged leaders ready to make an impact.

Leadership DeSoto 2026–2027 Program Tuition & Requirements:

Tuition for the 2026–2027 Leadership DeSoto Program is \$700 per participant. This fee covers all lunches, and session materials. A signed Code of Conduct is required and included with the application, which must be completed in full to be considered. Tuition may be paid by the participant, their employer, or a combination of both.

Leadership DeSoto is designed for individuals who are ready to take the next step in their professional and personal growth. The program is ideal for those looking to strengthen their leadership skills, expand their knowledge of DeSoto County, and build relationships that support both their organization and the community. You must be over 21 to participate in Leadership DeSoto.

The completed application for the 2026–2027 Leadership DeSoto Class must be submitted

Friday, June 5, 2026

1. Contact Information

Name:	Title:
Company:	Email:
Mailing address:	Date of Birth:
City, State & Zip:	Gender:
Cell phone:	Business phone:

2. Education - list higher education, including short courses or continuing education.

School:	School:
Degree:	Degree:
Graduation Year:	Graduation Year:

3. Employment Information

Primary Occupation / Employer:
Job title:

Briefly describe your greatest responsibility, skills and/or career achievement:

4. Prior Leadership Program Participation

Please list any leadership programs you have participated in (including Leadership DeSoto or other counties), along with the year completed.

If applicable, please list any positions you held during your time in the program (e.g., President, Treasurer):

5. Community Involvement

Please list your memberships, dates of service, and any offices held in organizations such as college, professional, civic, church, industry, or political groups.

6. Essay Questions

While we encourage a thorough response, be sure to stay within the space provided—no additional pages or attachments, please.

Question 1:

Why do you want to participate in the Leadership DeSoto program, and what qualities, experiences, or perspectives do you bring that would make you a valuable addition to the upcoming class?

Question 2:

What knowledge, skills, or connections are you hoping to gain from Leadership DeSoto?

7. Application Agreement

If Accepted:

I have cleared my calendar on the appropriate dates.

I understand that any funds generated by the class fundraiser will be distributed by the DeSoto County Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

I commit to attending at least seven of the nine full-day class sessions. In the event of an absence from any class or required event, I will communicate with the Program Director prior to the scheduled date.

I understand that if I miss three class days or any mandatory event, I will no longer be eligible to continue in the program.

I understand that the \$700 tuition is due by August 3rd and that I am personally responsible for any portion of tuition not paid by my employer.

If my employer pays any portion of my tuition, I understand they will be notified of any absences and may receive updates regarding my participation and progress in the program.

By signing this application, I acknowledge and accept the commitment outlined and agree to uphold these expectations if selected to participate in the Leadership DeSoto Program.

Signature _____ Date _____

10. EMPLOYER AUTHORIZATION (if applicable)

I approve the participation of _____ in the Leadership DeSoto program.

This applicant has the approval and full support of this organization, including the time commitment required to successfully complete the program. I have reviewed and approve the applicant's commitment as outlined in the application. For applicants who report to a board of directors, such as executive directors of nonprofit organizations, this form should be signed by the board president or chair.

Signature _____ Date _____

Title _____ Organization _____

Email _____ Phone _____

I agree to pay \$ _____ of the Leadership DeSoto tuition for the above applicant if accepted. I understand the tuition is nonrefundable and nontransferable.

Signature _____ Date _____



Leadership DeSoto Mission Statement:

To develop community leaders through local education, experience, and personal growth, equipping them with the skills and insight needed to lead and serve our community.

Class XVI Schedule

Session times typically run from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., though some days may start earlier or end later depending on the agenda.

Participants are allowed only two excused absence in order to be eligible for graduation.

2026

Wednesday, August 19

Welcome/Orientation- Mandatory

Wednesday, September 16

Community Service Day

Wednesday, October 28

Health Day- Elect Class Officers

Wednesday, November 18

Ag/ Environmental Day

Wednesday, December 16

Community History & Culture

2027

Wednesday, January 20

Community Wealth Day

Wednesday, February 17

Criminal Justice Day

Wednesday, March 24

Government Day

Wednesday, April 21

Education

Wednesday, May 12

Simsoc

Friday, May 14

Class Graduation/Fundraiser- Mandatory

Fundraiser – Date & Location to Be Determined by Class