

CITY LEADERS ACADEMY (CLA) 2026/2027 APPLICATION

PART I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

The City Leaders Academy is an immersive program designed to empower Columbus youth with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to create meaningful change. Through hands-on activities and engaging lessons, students learn how to harness their voice, develop leadership skills and lead for the public good. Participants explore what effective leadership looks like, how leaders succeed and why strong leadership matters.

CORE VALUES

- ✓ *Leadership*
- ✓ *Growth Mindset*
- ✓ *Collaboration*
- ✓ *Problem Solving*
- ✓ *Service*

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- **Residency:** Must be a City of Columbus resident (If you are currently receiving City of Columbus trash and recycling services, you are eligible)
- **Grade Level:** Must be entering 6th – 10th Grade in the fall of the programming year
- **Academic Standing:** Maintain a minimum 2.8 GPA.
- **Application Package Requirements:**
 - Completed application form.
 - Final copy of the previous academic year’s report card.
 - **New Applicants:** Two recommendation letters from a teacher, administrator, and/or community leader.
 - **Returning Participants:** Only updated application information, signature forms, final report cards, and interviews are required; no essays or letters of recommendation are necessary.

PART II: ADMISSIONS TIMELINE & CONTACT

Date	Milestone
May 1, 2026	Applications Open
July 1, 2026	Application Deadline (5:00 PM)
July 10 & 17, 2026	Mandatory Interview Days (1 per new applicant)
July 24, 2026	Selection notification sent via email





PROGRAM DIRECTORS

- Christophe McGhee: CBMcGhee@columbus.gov | 614-949-3647
- Nick Evans: NSEvans@columbus.gov | 614-616-0081

APPLICATION SUBMISSION METHODS

- Email (Preferred): CBMcGhee@columbus.gov
- Drop-Off: Blackburn Recreation Center (Front Desk), 263 Carpenter St., Columbus, OH 43205.

PART III: APPLICATION INFORMATION

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Youth Name:			Gender (Check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Birth Date:	Age:	School in Fall:	GPA:	Entering Grade:

GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Name of Child’s Guardian(s):			
Address:		City:	ZIP:
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	Work Phone:	
Email (Required-this is our preferred method of contact):			

EMERGENCY CONTACTS (OTHER THAN GUARDIANS)

Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone	Work Phone	Relationship





CAREER INTERESTS

Please indicate any career interests you may have (i.e. Medical field, lawyer, politician, entrepreneur, etc.)

PHOTOGRAPHY RELEASE

The staff, the media, and programming partners with permission from the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, may photograph or videotape my child for educational and public relations purposes.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parents and family members of the City Leaders may attend the sessions however do we have your permission to photograph and videotape you? Yes No

Signature: _____ Date: _____

FIELD TRIP, ROUTINE, AND ACTIVITY RELEASE

I give permission for my child to participate in all field trips and activities offered by the City Leaders Program. These trips will include what is listed on the agenda, however, may be subject to change. I also authorize the City of Columbus to do everything necessary to make sure of my child's health and safety in case of an emergency. I agree to not hold the City of Columbus, staff and sponsors of the program responsible for property damage or injury that results from my child's participation in this program.

Signature: _____ Date: _____





PART IV: ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Participation is key to a successful experience!
- **Absence Limit:** A student cannot have more than **three (3) unexcused absences** from programming sessions.
 - Exceeding this limit may result in removal from the program or ineligibility for the end-of-year ceremony.

2026-2027 OFFICIAL CALENDAR

- Oct. 3 & 17, 2026
- Nov. 7 & 21, 2026
- Dec. 5, 2026 (One-Class Month)
- Jan. 16, 2027 (One-Class Month)
- Feb. 6 & 20, 2027
- March 6, 2027 (One-Class Month)
- April 3 & 17, 2027
- May 1 & 15, 2027 (End of Year Leadership Ceremony)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

I have read the schedule and agree to the Attendance Expectations.

Student Signature: _____

Guardian Signature: _____

PART IV: THE ESSAY (NEW APPLICANTS ONLY)

1. **Prompt:** Interview a local leader (teacher, coach, or mentor).
 - a. **Ask:** "What was the most difficult decision you made this month, and what leadership quality helped you through it?"
2. **Content:** Summarize their answer and explain whether you would make the same choice.
3. **Include:** Your learning interests regarding leadership and how you imagine they will help you moving forward in life.





250+ words (typed in MLA format: 12pt Times New Roman, double-spaced)

Leader Interviewed: _____ Title: _____

PART V: INTERNAL USE ONLY (INTERVIEW RUBRIC)

- Required for **all selected applicants**. Perfection is not expected; however, preparation for the interview is encouraged.

Candidate: _____ Total Score (1-5): _____

- Professional Image: (Attire/Posture/Eye Contact)
- Poise: (Passion/Confidence/Preparation)
- Verbal Etiquette: (Formal address/Active listening)
- Punctuality: (Arrival for interview)
- Essay Poise: (Confidence in mentor interview summary)

Final Decision: Accept Waitlist Decline

