



LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

YEAR 2: March – November 2026

IMPORTANT DATES

- January: Recruitment Starts
- February 6: Cohort Finalized
- March 5: Payment Due
- March 9: Program kickoff
- November: Program Concludes



CORE COMPETENCIES

1. Developing & Inspiring People
2. Advancing Our Mission & Cause
3. Building Relationships
4. Leading Operations & Facilities Management
5. Strategic Planning & Board Governance

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



Leadership Academy is a unique and robust professional development opportunity for rising stars in the Y movement to sharpen their leadership skills in preparation for taking their careers to new levels.

This small-group cohort-based program uses a blended- learning approach and is held over a ten-month period with several web-based interactive sessions, peer group projects, individual learning plans, and three overnight in-person sessions.

New this year, the program includes the 2026 Northern New England Leadership Conference as its capstone event and graduation celebration.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS

This program is designed for emerging leaders that direct multiple departments, or for those that lead a large department functioning across multiple sites. Participants must have worked full- time for their YMCA for a minimum of two years.

Participants will be selected in collaboration with Alliance and local YMCA leadership. Participants must be able to commit to attending all sessions.

The cost of this program is \$1,200 and is paid by the participants' YMCA. This fee covers course instruction, program materials, attendance at the 2026 NNE Leadership Conference, and lodging and food for in-person meetings. Each YMCA will ensure that its participant is granted the necessary time out of the office to attend all Leadership Academy meetings and is reimbursed for any additional travel expenses consistent with its staff travel policy.

Nominations must be submitted by the nominee's supervisor or Y CEO. All nomination are due by January 30, 2026.

Program Contact: Rebecca Stanfield McCown, CEO
Rebecca@nneymcas.org

To access the nomination form
click [here](#).

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

March 9, 2026 | Program Orientation **VIRTUAL**

March 23–24, 2026 | Opening Session **IN-PERSON (Portsmouth, NH)**

April 7, 2026 | Developing & Inspiring People **VIRTUAL**

May 5, 2026 | Cause Driven Leadership & Advancing Our Mission **VIRTUAL**

May 19–20, 2026 | Facilitating Engaged Participation and Collaboration **IN-PERSON (Location TBD)**

June 3, 2026 | Building Relationships & Board Governance **VIRTUAL**

July & August 2026 | Peer Visits & Group Project Work

September 2, 2026 | Peer Visit Learnings & Leading Operations **VIRTUAL**

September 24, 2026 | Facilities Management **VIRTUAL**

October 7, 2026 | Cultivating a Culture of Giving **VIRTUAL**

October 28, 2026 | Group Project Working Session **VIRTUAL**

November 2026 | Final Presentations, NNE Leadership Conference, Graduation **IN-PERSON (Portland, ME)**

PROGRAM FACILITATORS & INSTRUCTORS

The primary program facilitator will be Delia Clark. Delia's work centers on empowering people and strengthening communities through place-based education, civic engagement, and partnership. With more than three decades of experience in community engagement and education, Delia has served as a trainer, speaker, and facilitator across the United States and Central/Eastern Europe. She has worked with organizations such as the U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, Shelburne Farms, and QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment—helping communities and educators connect people to place, purpose, and one another.

Delia previously served as Director of the Center for Place-based Learning and Community Engagement, taught graduate-level courses in Environmental Education and Interpretation at Antioch University New England, and was the lead trainer for the Appalachian Trail's Trail to Every Classroom and the Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom programs.

The Leadership Academy will be co-facilitated by Rebecca Stanfield McCown, CEO of the NNE Alliance, and participants will also be joined by dynamic leaders from YMCA of the USA, other YMCA Alliances, local YMCAs, and external community partners for presentations and discussions on each of the core competencies covered during the program. In addition, participants will receive one-on-one coaching from the Alliance CEO and/or local Y CEOs, and conduct in-person site visits to neighboring YMCAs.