

Ohio Tourism LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 2027

Build your leadership. Expand your network.
Strengthen Ohio tourism.

APPLICATIONS OPEN

Apply today at ohiotravel.org



Ohio Travel
ASSOCIATION



Why Invest in the Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy?

Investing in a person strengthens the whole organization.

Sending an employee or partner through the Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy (OTLA) is more than professional development. It is an investment in stronger skills, broader industry understanding, valuable professional relationships, and people who feel trusted and valued. OTLA was created to develop strong, knowledgeable travel professionals for Ohio. Since 2008, more than 300 industry professionals have participated, building the knowledge, skills, confidence, and connections to contribute more meaningfully to their organizations, communities, and Ohio's travel economy.

Bring stronger skills back to your organization.

OTLA participants learn how to think strategically about the travel economy and put that knowledge to work. Through six intensive sessions, participants strengthen skills in leadership, communications, community engagement, advocacy, marketing, collaboration, and placemaking. They work through real-world issues, learn from leaders in their fields, and explore challenges and opportunities facing Ohio's travel economy.

Participants return better prepared to:

- Make a stronger case for the value of travel to boards, community leaders, elected officials, and other stakeholders.
- Build support and stronger relationships with community partners.
- Communicate more effectively with different audiences.
- Understand how decisions affecting tourism are made and where their organization can have influence.
- Identify new marketing, partnership, and experience-development opportunities.
- Work more confidently across organizations, sectors, and communities.

Expand the network available to your organization.

One of OTLA's greatest returns is the relationships participants build. Class members represent destinations, attractions, hotels, restaurants, outdoor recreation, agencies, economic development organizations, government, media, and other parts of Ohio's travel economy. They also connect with leaders and resources from across the state. Those relationships create a professional network participants can turn to for ideas, advice, introductions, partnerships, and problem-solving long after the program ends.

Invest in people you want to keep and grow.

Professional development sends important messages: *We see your potential. We value your contribution. We want to help you succeed.* Meaningful development opportunities strengthen an employee's connection to an organization while giving them new ways to contribute. OTLA demonstrates confidence in that person, expands their professional horizons, and gives them opportunities to bring new knowledge and relationships back to your team. It is both an investment in their future and in your organization's ability to retain, develop, and engage talented people.

The return extends beyond one participant.

When you invest in someone through OTLA, you are not simply sending them to a leadership program. You are:

- Building skills your organization can put to work.
- Expanding the relationships and resources available to your team.
- Developing a more confident professional who can represent your organization effectively.
- Showing a valued employee or partner that their growth matters.

The participant grows. Your organization gets stronger. And Ohio's travel industry gains another well-informed professional prepared to lead. Consider signing up an employee, board member, volunteer, or partner today!