

Highlights of the vital and ongoing work of the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce

For decades, collaborative communities have produced leadership programs, usually under the auspices of their local Chamber of Commerce, to build a network of motivated, connected, knowledgeable “do-ers” with a shared vision for a better future. This region accomplished the same through its Leadership Charlottesville program, a long-standing program of the Chamber with hundreds of local alums.

The two-year hiatus of this venerated program has provided us an opportunity to assess the landscape and re-imagine this program as an entirely new experience that builds on past success and accomplishes a variety of new outcomes. The Chamber and several high-profile partners have taken a deep dive into the concept of leadership and what skills and tools will be needed in a new era.

And so we are thrilled to announce the launch of the Leaders Lab of Greater Charlottesville, produced by the Chamber in partnership with the Center for Nonprofit Excellence and the University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service and Institute for Engagement & Negotiation. The Leaders Lab is now accepting applications for the inaugural cohort from September through May 2023.

The leaders of our partner institutions have contributed hundreds of hours to helping us build a new curriculum that incorporates three elements:

- Leadership Development—Building a competency model: leadership, management, self-management, analytics, relationships, etc.
- Community knowledge-building—Community case studies focusing on challenges such as homelessness, food and health equity, municipal comprehensive planning, etc.
- Community Problem-Solving—Actively honing leadership skills such as collaborative governance, consensus-building, effective facilitation, multi-party negotiation, innovation, conflict resolution, etc.

At the end of this program, participants will be able to apply learning to complete their leadership plans; apply a nuanced



**Elizabeth Cromwell**  
*President and CEO of the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce*

perspective and understanding of community issues; demonstrate understanding of community problem-solving skills development through practice; and access a new network of leaders that supports individual growth AND collaborative action toward a more broadly thriving community.

For this program to be successful, the cohort must include representation from diverse individuals and organizations. We are also profoundly aware of our collective responsibility to equip a broader range of people in leadership skill-building if we are to reach our full potential as a community.

For this reason, this month, the Chamber is instituting the Leaders Lab Fund for the Future, a new scholarship fund to offset the \$2,900 tuition for individuals who may not have the ability to pay. The Chamber’s \$50,000 investment to build more diverse leadership in the region represents the most significant single investment the Chamber has made in any program in its long history.

We are seeking several matching partners to help us grow diverse leadership and leverage our tremendous talent pool into greater shared success. Don’t hesitate to contact me for further information about investing in the Leaders Lab Fund for the Future.

And of course, the application to participate in the Leaders Lab inaugural

cohort is now open, and we would love for you to apply! Details are available at [cvillechamber.com/leaderslab](http://cvillechamber.com/leaderslab)

In closing, I am humbled by the support we have received from Cristine Nardi (Executive Director of the Center for Nonprofit Excellence), Larry Terry (Executive Director of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service), Frank Dukes (Distinguished Fellow at UVA’s Institute for Engagement & Negotiation), and the Chamber Board of Directors.



The Leaders Lab of Greater Charlottesville is a 9-month program for current and emerging leaders to build leadership skills and practice collaborative community problem-solving. Our aim is to create an enduring network of diverse, knowledgeable, well-connected, passionate individuals who speak a common leadership language and share a vision for a more broadly thriving region.

“Leaders Lab of Greater Charlottesville is grounded in the belief that all of us are and can be leaders—wherever we sit professionally or in our communities. If you’re hoping to grow your own leadership skills, gain a deeper understanding of regional issues, develop the tools to be an agent of community change, and meet others seeking the same, this new program is for you.”—Cristine Nardi

“The Cooper Center’s emphasis on improving good governance across the Commonwealth is based on our belief in the power of cross-sectoral leadership and the Leaders Lab is reflective of this vision. This collaboration with the Chamber, CNE and IEN was carefully put together in the hopes that individuals from all corners of the region will find value in this program and use it to be transformative in their communities. We are thrilled to be a part of this important work and are looking forward to beginning this journey with the first cohort this fall.”—Larry Terry

“In today’s world, leadership can and should come from all sectors and all levels. The ability to engage across boundaries is key to building a community that works for all its residents. I am both pleased and honored that our Institute is part of this promising and important effort.”—Frank Dukes



**Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce** 434-295-3141 [cvillechamber.com](http://cvillechamber.com)

The Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce advocates, convenes, and engages to strengthen business in the greater Charlottesville Region.