



Verde Valley
Leadership, Inc.

Course Program
Manual **2026**

Class XIX

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Vision

Inspiring Individuals to Action

We create environments supporting individuals for the betterment of our communities, our families, and ourselves.

We understand leadership is practice.

We adhere to the standards set forth by our guiding principles. We challenge individuals to realize their potential.

Our Mission

Verde Valley Leadership, Inc., a non-profit corporation, provides personal and professional growth opportunities through development of leadership skills, community awareness and diverse, influential networks.

We seek individuals who demonstrate the skills and interest to work toward the best possible environment for families, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government, and other systems that nurture strength within communities. VVL remains adaptive in providing the most effective organizational support possible in these pursuits.

Guiding Principles

Service - Service is embedded in all the actions we take. Service is at the core of our practice.

Integrity - We never compromise our integrity. Having integrity means more than simply the absence of deception. We tell the truth, honor our commitments, adhere to ethical standards, treat others with respect and are accountable for our actions. We do the right thing because it is the right thing to do.

Courage - We face challenges, make difficult choices, take risks, rise above circumstances, and seek ways to improve.

Teamwork - We practice teamwork through such actions as assisting each other, providing each other open and honest feedback, exchanging information, and executing our tasks in a timely and integrated manner. We recognize we make better decisions and produce better results together than working alone.

Leadership - We lead by example. We foster an environment that empowers and motivates others to successfully accomplish their objectives. We mentor and develop each other and our peers. We serve.

This manual is provided as a tool, offering explanations and guidelines relevant to participation in the program.

Course Objectives

The **four objectives** of the Verde Valley Leadership, Inc. (VVL) Program are:

- 1. Identify & understand** the unique challenges and opportunities associated with working & leading in the Verde Valley
- 2. Gain Understanding of Leadership Styles** and how to lead effectively
- 3. Develop Key Leadership Skills**
 - a. Effective Decision Making
 - b. Effective Management / Delegation
 - c. Leading through Others / Empowerment
 - d. Strong Communication Skills
- 4. Connection to People & Community**
 - a. Ethics and Principles
 - b. Cultural Competence
 - c. Diversity / Inclusion

The success of VVL is contingent on each class member's engagement and full participation in the program.

Throughout the program, class members are challenged to exercise and develop ideas, abilities, and to network. This is accomplished by stepping forward, engaging, and taking part in all VVL activities offered. Attendance at scheduled VVL functions, involvement in all events, meeting deadlines and interaction among class members is essential to the total learning experience and is an expectation of each class member.

This manual is provided as a tool, offering explanations and guidelines relevant to participation in the program.

Graduation standards have been established to ensure participants of VVL have met their obligations to the program, their classmates, their sponsors, and to the community. At the conclusion of the program, the Board of Directors will review attendance, participation, engagement, and completion of course requirements as a key requirement for graduation.

Information in this manual has been organized in (5) basic components. With the program structure composed of a variety of activities throughout the program, those are fully described in Components 1 through 4. Component 5 outlines expectations relating to class member participation.

Yavapai College Program Outline

Yavapai College Verde Valley Campus
601 Black Hills Drive; Clarkdale, AZ 86324; Room: G-103

Typical days will start at Yavapai College. Due to unexpected circumstances, changes may be required. In the event that another meeting place is required to start the VVL Class day, communication will be provided by the VVL President.

2026 C DATES

APRIL 10

MAY 8

JUNE 12

JULY 10

AUGUST 14

SEPTEMBER 11

OCTOBER 9

NOVEMBER 13

DECEMBER 11

JANUARY 8

GRADUATION: TBD

The educational portion of the program that takes place with Dr. Hanna in conjunction with Yavapai College will be supplemented by online assignments on Canvas. The Community Engagement portion of the day, as well as Shadow Day & Volunteer Day assignments will be overseen by the VVL Board via communications outside of Canvas.

Component 1: VVL Class Days

VVL Class Days serve as a structure and curriculum of the program.

VVL Class Days create rich learning environments offering education to class members including specific, key community issues. The day may include presentations, guest lectures, discussions, debates, demonstrations, hands-on activities, tours and more. At the same time, these events provide exposure to regional experts and leaders knowledgeable in the topic under consideration. Discussions of the leadership aspects of the specific community issue, leadership skill-building exercises, and other related activities will be integrated into each VVL Class Day.

Feedback

Continuous feedback is invaluable to the growing needs of the VVL organization. To ensure constant improvement in our program, students will be required to complete the survey for that day as provided by the board member who is mentoring the community engagement portion of the day. This must be completed and returned to that board member at the end of each day.

Component 2: Leadership Application – Community Engagement Day

Inspiring individuals to action is the core of Verde Valley Leadership. The leadership application opportunity allows students to work in small groups with a Mentoring VVL Board Member to plan the Community Engagement portion of each class day. Class participants are expected to exercise their leadership skills to plan and execute a community engagement day that is productive, highlights resources in the Verde Valley and exposes class members to a wide range of what our community has to offer.

Students will be randomly assigned a Community Engagement Day in partnership with at least one VVL Board Member.

Expectations for preparing the assigned Community Engagement Day:

- Students must communicate with their board mentor prior planning and execution of the assigned day. The schedule, planned tours / speakers, back up options in case plans fall through must be approved by the assigned board

mentor to ensure quality speakers and/or field trips are in alignment of the VVL principles, mission, and objectives.

- Students are expected to communicate with local leaders to plan community engagement activities. Your board mentor can guide you in building that network and providing needed introductions.
- Students must create an agenda and provide to board mentor all relevant details including but not limited to biographies, travel arrangements, locations, meet up spots, and proper attire.

Community Engagement Assignments

Class Date	Due Date	Topic	Board Member	Students
04/10/26		All Day Yavapai College	ALL	
05/08/26		Health & Wellness (morning)	Christian & Kelli N	
06/12/26		Professional Development Day	ALL	
07/10/26	06/24/26	Youth Development & Education	Kellie M & Patty G	Jennifer & Leila
08/14/26	07/29/26	Local Government	Patty P & Andrea	Josh
09/11/26	08/26/26	History & Volunteerism	Patty G & Andrea	Eric & Chris B
10/09/26	09/30/26	Public Safety	Andrea & Kelli N	Chris H
11/13/26	10/28/26	Recreation & Tourism	Crisi & Kelli N	Nikki & Matt
12/11/26	12/03/26	Economic Development	Crisi & Christian	Katie & Melanie
01/08/26		Synthesis Day	ALL	

Component 3: Shadow Day

The Shadow Day experience provides class members with the opportunity to visit and observe firsthand the leadership style of a civic, business, or professional leader by spending a day interacting with that person.

Class members will execute their own shadow day. This exercise allows class members a unique opportunity to participate in a one-on-one working environment with their host; therefore, only a single class member is allowed to shadow an individual in a class year.

Optimum success of a Shadow Day is attained through reflection, documentation and sharing the experience with others. Therefore, class members are required to prepare a written report of their shadowing experience, with a verbal recap to be presented during VVL Synthesis Day. Written reports should be at least one (1) page; verbal reports should be five (5) to ten (10) minutes long. The reports should focus on leadership styles and related observations made by the class members throughout the shadowing experience. The reports should also include highlights of the day, particularly any personal/professional lessons learned. A copy shall be emailed to the VVL President.

Shadow Day is frequently the most popular and impactful experience of the program. Class members are encouraged to consider a broad range of possibilities when selecting their Shadow Day host. It is recommended that each student does research on their shadow day host prior to the shadow day.

- Students must notify the VVL President of their **Shadow Day selection** by **August 8th**
- Students shall submit **written report to VVL President by November 14th**.
- Students must be prepared to **discuss the impact of their shadow day on January 8th**, during Synthesis Day.

Shadow Day Objectives:

- Observe the leader's style of interaction with other leaders and staff. 2. Interact with and interview the leader.
- Analyze leadership skills up close and in action.
- Consider the significance of personal learning experience.
- Obtain a general understanding of the leader's duties and responsibilities.

Considerations

- What do you hope to learn from this experience?
- What types of leaders inspire or motivate you?
- Why do you want to choose this particular leader?

Suggested Questions

Below are questions to consider using as potential points of conversation with your host:

- What have been the biggest challenges in your role?
- What are your strengths/ weaknesses and how do they play a part in your work day?
- How would you categorize your leadership style?
- How do you inspire ownership in the organization?
- How do you handle conflict?
- Are you a risk taker? Explain.
- What is your vision for your organization?
- Who inspires you?
- How do you get others to buy into your vision?
- How do you listen to others in the organization?
- What do you do when employees / team members make mistakes?
- How do employees participate in decision making?
- How do you deal with stress within the organization?
- How do you manage the stresses of your job and maintain a work/ life balance?
- What has been your worst ethical dilemma? How did you resolve it? Would you say that most of your decisions are based on instinct, judgement, input, or popular opinion?
- What decision are you most proud of?
- What would you consider to be one of your life's greatest accomplishments?
- Do you have any tips for improving time management skills?

Component 4: Program Support Activities

Social Media

Students will be asked to voluntarily provide pictures, comments etc. to be used for social media content.

Day of Service

Community servitude is an invaluable part of being a leader in the Verde Valley. Our tag-line states “inspiring individuals to action” therefore, a day of service is a requirement to complete the program. The Board members encourage all class participants to actively seek volunteer opportunities in our community, identifying themselves as students of VVL. Students are encouraged to utilize Volunteer Sedona Verde Valley (vsvv.org) or reach out to VVL board members for local volunteer opportunities.

Students are required to provide the board with a photo and brief description of their experience to be used on VVL social media.

Component 5: Program Policies

VVL Class Day Attendance

VVL Class Days are a primary curriculum activity of the VVL program. A commitment to attendance at VVL Class Days is communicated at the time of application, at orientation into the program and is expected from each class member throughout the year. While the Board of Directors recognizes personal illness and emergencies are possible, the expectation is a priority level of commitment to attendance at VVL Class Days.

Policy: If a class member must miss **one** VVL Class Day or portion thereof, she/he must notify the VVL President as soon as possible prior to the VVL Class Day so other arrangements can be made. Accordingly, should a class member anticipate attendance with any VVL activity as problematic, they must contact VVL President who will provide counsel through the situation.

Any class member who must miss a **second** VVL Class Day will be required to complete missed assignments to cover any missed content. Class member will be required to meet with a member of the VVL Board to discuss future attendance, conflicts, or continued participation in the program. Graduation from the program will be assessed by the Board members of Verde Valley Leadership.

Any class member who must miss a **third** VVL Class Day will not receive credits from Yavapai College for program completion. **Graduation from the program will be assessed by the Board members of Verde Valley Leadership.**

Tardiness and/or Leaving Early

Out of respect for professors, speakers and presenters, it is expected that every class member's participation at VVL events be timely, i.e., arriving when requested according to the day's agenda and staying throughout the entire day's program. Class members arriving late or leaving early more than twice during the program will not be eligible for graduation. Communication must be made in advance with VVL President when planned tardiness or absences occur.

Dress Code

Dress is to be business casual attire that is appropriate for office wear, no T-shirts displaying an advertisement or shorts. VVL class members are a direct reflection of the program. VVL exists within and promotes leadership in business, government, and civic communities. Should any event warrant attire other than the business casual standard, VVL Board will notify class members and prospective attendees accordingly.

VVL members are expected to wear their VVL name tags during any VVL Class Days, Field Trips, Shadow Days or related program or event.

Policy: Unless otherwise notified, dress is to be business casual, attire that is appropriate for office wear.

Community Discovery

VVL's success depends on our ability to draw upon community resources. When exclusive field trips are arranged and VVL class participants fail to arrive, this reflects negatively on the organization and jeopardizes the future goodwill of the program. It is expected that all class members attending VVL Class days will also participate in any planned field trips.

Cell/Smart Phone Usage

While the use of a cell phone can be important during the day, it is the intention that each person bring their undivided, professional attention to all VVL activities. Out of courtesy to presenters, class members, field trip hosts, all cell phones should be silenced or not kept on-person during any VVL program-related activity. Throughout any VVL program day, electronic check-ins, including texting, can be handled during scheduled breaks. Should a class member have a need that warrants maintaining outside contact during a VVL activity, calls received must be tended to outside of the group's activities.

Policy: Any phone call/text answered during a VVL program session must be

handled by voice or text outside of the class/group setting. Should an issue(s) warrant it or be on-going, any determination for continued, effective participation in the program will be addressed and resolved by the Board of Directors.

Participation/Assessment

The following generally outlines the Board's expectations of each class member's participation in all VVL days, related events, program support activities and on committees:

- Regular and timely attendance at meetings
- Timely response to emails (generally within 24 hours)
- Effective completion of tasks within allotted timeframe

Ethics – Program Core Values

The growth of VVL has flourished and each year a new group of class members is welcomed. Each person becomes connected with VVL by virtue of their involvement in the program and is not only a direct reflection of the program, but they also represent the organization.

The VVL Board of Directors guides the program by operating under established Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, and adopted Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles.

It is the expectation that class members uphold VVL's Guiding Principles. Should any issue(s) warrant it or be ongoing, determination for continued, effective participation in the program will be addressed and resolved by the Board of Directors.

The students are not to accept money from other students. Only a designated board member can accept money upon board approval for items such as donations, class recognition opportunities, or lunch.

2025 Board of Directors

TITLE	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	EMAIL	PHONE
President	Crisi	Clark	Crisi.Clark@campverde.az.gov	928-451-5660
Vice President	Kellie	McCune	kellie.mccune@aps.com or Gkmccune@gmail.Com	928-308-7468
Treasurer	Christian	Olivia Del Rio	Christian@Verdevalleychamber.org	928-301-3347
Secretary	Andrea	Schultz	Andrea@verdevalleychamber.org	928-451-6483
Director	Patty	Greer	patricia.greer@aps.com or pattysfire@yahoo.com	928-821-2445
Director	Kevin	Murie	Kmurie@cottonwoodaz.gov	928-277-7518
Director	Kellie	Neal	kelli.neal@nahealth.com	928-853-7810
Director	Patty	Pike	patricia.pike@cuwest.org or 4azpikes@gmail.com	928-301-5933

2026 Program Participants

Class XIX				
Name	Email	Work Phone	Cell Phone	Position
Melanie Lucas	melanielucas869@gmail.com		928-925-9591	Shelter Manager at Verde Valley Humane Society
Katie Cook	kcook@cottonwoodaz.gov	928-340-2711	602-761-8620	HR Specialist II at City of Cottonwood
Eric Sabelhaus	sabelhauseric@gmail.com		812-719-8850	Customer Project Associate at APS
Matt Meili-Petzoldt	assistantmanager@verdevalleyhumanesociety.org	928-634-7387	320-291-2226	Assistant Manager at Verde Valley Humane Society
Jacob Shouse	carl.shouse2@nahealth.com		940-782-6522	Nurse Manager at Northern Arizona Healthcare
Leila Glass	leila@blazinm.com		928-632-3495	Owner/Manager at Blazin' M Ranch
Jennifer Somit	jsomit@cottonwoodaz.gov	928-340-2769	707-228-0656	Public Works Project Manager at City of Cottonwood
Chris Hurtt	churtt@cottonwoodaz.gov		928-582-0341	Inspector at City of Cottonwood
Nikki Allen	nha86335@gmail.com	928-203-5047	928-295-5047	Building Permit Technician at City of Sedona
Chris Biggs	chris.biggs@campverde.az.gov	928-554-0063	928-300-4627	Plans Examiner/ Planner I at Town of Camp Verde

Dr. Megan Hanna
Faculty Program Director, Business
Yavapai College
Megan.hanna@yc.edu