

ACEC  
*Wisconsin*

# LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE 2026

Elevate Your Career. Lead the Future.



[acecwi.org](http://acecwi.org)



# Elevate Your Career. Lead the Future.

Join us for an unparalleled journey in leadership and career development tailored specifically for Wisconsin's design professionals. Our program is designed to catapult individuals onto a trajectory of success in project management and principal positions. Over six immersive sessions, participants delve into the core aspects of leadership and the business of engineering.

## Forge Lasting Connections

At the heart of our program lies the invaluable opportunity for relationship building. Through engaging sessions and dedicated networking time, participants form strong, enduring bonds, fostering the exchange of innovative ideas. Through this shared experience individuals cultivate a robust network of industry contacts. Plus, with each session featuring an overnight component, the networking continues beyond the classroom, encouraging participants to stay overnight and deepen connections.

## Expert Guidance

Our lineup of presenters comprises a blend of seasoned professional speakers and esteemed firm principals. Guiding the group on their leadership journey is our experienced Class Advisor Jan Zander. Jan will offer practical guidance and real-world scenarios to encourage, challenge and mentor the group.

## Transformational Sessions

Embark on a transformative learning experience through our comprehensive sessions:

1. **Next Level Leadership: From Doing the Work to Leading the Way:** Discover the essence of leadership, starting with self-awareness and extending to understanding others.
2. **Business Development and Marketing:** Unlock the secrets to winning work and driving business growth.
3. **Running the Business:** Navigate the complexities of running a successful firm with confidence.
4. **Risk Management for Future Firm Leaders:** Learn to anticipate and mitigate risks, crucial for future leadership roles.
5. **Government Affairs 101:** Gain insights into the intersection of government policies and the design industry.
6. **Work Life Balance for an Effective Leader:** Achieve harmony between personal and professional life for sustained success.

## Personal Growth

Preparation and follow-up are integral parts of our program. Each participant develops a personal action plan, serving as a roadmap for their growth journey. To foster accountability and maximize personal development, participants are paired with accountability partners.

## Earn Professional Development Hours

Throughout the program, participants earn approximately 40 PDH credit hours. Program content fulfills the biennial ethics PDH credit requirement of two hours. The enrollment investment is less than \$125 per professional development hour earned.







## IDEAL CANDIDATES

Leadership Institute welcomes driven individuals who demonstrate exceptional performance and a commitment to excellence. The ideal candidates are those with the potential to lead projects, teams, offices, or even entire companies.

While the program traditionally caters to professionals with six to 12 years of industry experience. Individuals from varied backgrounds and levels of experience are welcome and encouraged to apply.

- Invest in the future of **high-potential emerging professionals** by providing them with the necessary tools and insights to excel in leadership roles.
- Prepare **employees transitioning into new roles managing people and projects**, equipping them with the skills and confidence needed for success.
- Reinforce existing skills, cultivate confidence, and **expand the leadership toolbox of both new and seasoned leaders**.

We welcome all professionals within engineering firms: engineers, architects, planners, historians, surveyors, as well as those in business development, finance, human resources, and marketing roles. Leadership Institute welcomes participants from all professional and personal backgrounds, including individuals of all genders, races, ethnicities and identities.



## INVEST IN THE FUTURE

Participation in our exclusive program offers unparalleled professional development opportunities. By enrolling your staff in the Leadership Institute, you're making a strategic investment in the future success of your firm.

The enrollment investment is less than \$125 per professional development hour earned.

### Tuition:

- ACEC Wisconsin Member Tuition: \$4,950 per attendee
- Non-member Tuition: \$9,900 per attendee

Tuition covers all professional speaker fees, necessary supplies, on-site meals and beverages, registration for the Awards Banquet (for the applicant), and a recognition plaque. Additionally, the sponsoring firm is responsible for the costs associated with assigned pre-session books, lodging, and travel expenses.



**Leadership Institute Class of 2026 | Deadline: July 11, 2025**



# APPLICATION PROCESS

**Deadline: July 11, 2025**

To apply for the Leadership Institute, please download the application form from [www.acecwi.org](http://www.acecwi.org). Completing and submitting the application form serves as both an individual and firm commitment to the program. Honoring this commitment may mean delegating project work, interviews, etc. and balancing your personal calendar to attend.

Each applicant must have a principal sponsor within their firm, who commits to providing support for the applicant to attend and fully engage in each session. The sponsor will review goals and expectations with the applicant before the program begins and again near its conclusion.

**Leadership Institute's class size is limited.** Applications will be reviewed by a panel based on the information provided in the application form, using the evaluation criteria outlined on the official Leadership Institute Class of 2026 Application Form.



## SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

***Participants must be available for all sessions.***

*A successful program experience requires a commitment from the participant and the firm to attend each session. Honoring this commitment may mean delegating project work, interviews, etc. and balancing your personal calendar to attend.*

### **SESSION 1:**

Next Level Leadership:  
From Doing the Work to Leading the Way  
September 18-19, 2025

### **SESSION 2:**

Business Development & Marketing -  
What it Takes to Win Work  
October 21-22, 2025

### **SESSION 3:**

Running the Business  
December 3-4, 2025

### **SESSION 4:**

Risk Management for Future Firm Leaders  
January 21-22, 2026

### **SESSION 5:**

Government Affairs 101 & Legislative Day  
February 24-25, 2026

### **SESSION 6:**

Work/Life Balance for an Effective Leader  
April 16-17, 2026

### **GRADUATION:**

Awards Banquet  
April 24, 2026



# 1

## SESSION 1

### Next Level Leadership: From Doing the Work to Leading the Way

**Date:** September 18-19, 2025

**Location:** Lambeau Field & Lodge Kohler, Green Bay

**Schedule:** **Day 1** 11:00am - 9:00pm **Day 2** 7:30am- 1:30pm

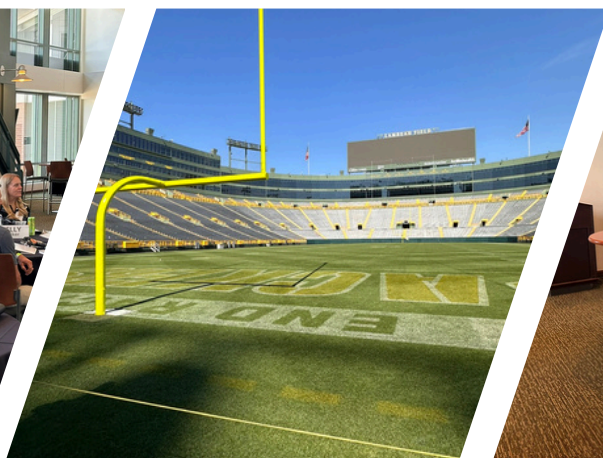
Ready to move from doing the work to leading the way? Join Jen Bertsch of LeadWell Consulting for Next Level Leadership, a powerful session designed to help you build self-awareness, lead with intention, and empower others to succeed. You'll gain practical strategies to coach effectively, align your team through values, and foster a culture of growth and purpose.

#### Session Highlights:

- Personal StrengthsFinder Assessment: Gain valuable insights into your behavioral style and how it impacts your interactions with others.
- Panel Discussion: Hear from a diverse panel of successful firm leaders as they share their perspectives and insights on leadership in the design profession.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Build self-awareness to lead with clarity and confidence
- Shift from managing tasks to empowering people
- Lead through values to help others thrive
- Adapt your style to work effectively with different personalities
- Coach and develop others for lasting impact
- Foster a motivating and growth-oriented team culture



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# 2

## SESSION 2

### Business Development & Marketing - What it Takes to Win Work

**Date:** October 21-22, 2025  
**Location:** Kimpton Journeyman Hotel, Milwaukee  
**Schedule:** **Day 1** 1:00 - 9:00 pm **Day 2** 7:30am- 1:30pm

In today's competitive landscape, winning work is essential for the growth and success of your firm. Join us for an engaging session led by veteran A/E marketing expert Barbara Shuck, FSMPS, CPSM, as she shares over 30 years of experience and insights into business development and marketing strategies tailored for the design profession.

#### Session Highlights:

- Interactive Discussions and Hands-on Activities: Explore industry best practices that are adaptable and scalable to firms of any size or structure. From client analysis to persuasive communication techniques, attendees will gain practical tools and resources to grow their firm's backlog and enhance their personal business development confidence.
- Practical Sales Call Exercise: Put your skills to the test with a hands-on sales call exercise, where attendees will have the opportunity to plan and conduct a business development meeting with a client. Receive valuable feedback from the client, instructor, and peers to refine your approach and improve your effectiveness.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Develop business development skills and best practices to overcome challenges and envision success.
- Gain insight into the power of persuasion and buyer behaviors and learn strategies to convey competitive advantages effectively.
- Acquire tips for developing profitable, strategically aligned business for your firm.
- Learn proven conversation starters and exercises to boost sales call productivity.
- Explore ideas to enhance proposals, presentations, and marketing tools to effectively build awareness and win more work.



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# 3

## SESSION 3

### Running the Business

**Date:** December 3-4, 2025

**Location:** Osthoff Resort, Elkhart Lake

**Schedule:** **Day 1** 1:00 - 9:00pm **Day 2** 7:30am- 2:00pm

In today's competitive environment, it's essential for leaders to have a solid grasp of the fundamentals of running a successful business.

### Session Highlights:

- **Financial Fundamentals:** Learn to interpret and understand financial reports, including balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow statements. Gain insights into key financial indicators and their impact on firm performance.
- **Real-World Case Studies:** Dive into real-world examples and analyze data from successful and less successful firms. Discover strategies for leveraging financial insights to drive future growth and success.
- **Business Etiquette Mastery:** Enjoy a five-course dinner while mastering proper etiquette for business and social events. Learn valuable tips and techniques to navigate various business and social situations with confidence and grace.

### Learning Outcomes:

- Develop the ability to interpret and understand financial reports to make informed business decisions.
- Gain an understanding of key financial indicators and their impact on firm performance.
- Learn how value is created within a firm and explore strategies for benchmarking this value.
- Master proper business etiquette for various business and social settings, enhancing your professional presence and relationships.



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# 4

## SESSION 4

### *Risk Management for Future Firm Leaders*

**Date:** January 21-22, 2026  
**Location:** Delafield Hotel, Delafield  
**Schedule:** **Day 1** 1:00 - 9:00pm **Day 2** 7:30am- 2:30pm

The success of an engineering firm is dependent on managing risk. This program provides the information leaders need to know and understand about risk management. Learn to think beyond the technical work and more like a businessperson.

#### Session Highlights:

- Enterprise Risk Management: Gain an introduction to Enterprise Risk Management and learn how to leverage it to benefit your business holistically.
- Professional Liability Insurance: Explore the issues surrounding professional liability insurance and understand the sources of risk and risk drivers from both a business and legal perspective.
- Ethics and Professional Conduct: Dive into ethics and professional conduct training, fulfilling biennial ethics PDH credit requirements. Explore real-world case studies to understand the importance of ethical behavior in engineering.
- HR Legal Basics for Managers: Understand the legal aspects of human resources management, including employment law and workplace issues. Learn how to effectively address and mitigate workplace challenges while ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Identify sources of risk and strategies to lower exposure.
- Analyze contract terms and conditions to mitigate risks and protect the firm's interests.
- Gain insight into the types of insurance required for a successful firm and how to navigate insurance considerations effectively.
- Learn to spot disputes before they escalate into claims and the importance of thorough documentation.
- Understand ethical standards and models for ethical behavior in engineering.
- Acquire knowledge of HR legal basics to effectively manage workplace issues.



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# 5

## SESSION 5

### Government Affairs 101 & Legislative Day

**Date:** February 24-25, 2026

**Location:** Madison Concourse Hotel & State Capitol, Madison

**Schedule:** **Day 1** 10:00am - 9:00pm **Day 2** 8:00am - 3:00 pm

Understanding the legislative process and its impact on the design industry is crucial for professionals in our field. This enlightening session explores the intersection of politics and the design profession. Learn why it's essential to build relationships with legislators and actively participate in the legislative process.

#### Session Highlights:

- Legislative Process Overview: Gain insights into how the legislative process affects the design industry and ACEC WI's role in advocating for industry priorities.
- Legislative Day Participation: Engage with state legislators and advocate for ACEC WI priority issues. Experience firsthand the importance of grassroots advocacy and the impact of industry engagement in the political process.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the influence of politics on the design industry and ACEC WI's advocacy efforts.
- Gain experience in visiting elected officials and effectively presenting industry issues.
- Develop confidence in participating in grassroots politics and understand the significance of engaging with ACEC WI's Conduit, PAC, and ACEC National PAC.
- Acquire an understanding of ACEC WI's structure and committee involvement opportunities.



# 6

## SESSION 6

### Work/Life Balance for an Effective Leader

**Date:** April 16-17, 2026  
**Location:** Ironworks Hotel, Beloit  
**Schedule:** **Day 1** 1:00 - 9:00pm **Day 2** 7:30am- 3:00pm

Maintaining a healthy work/life balance is essential for effective leadership and overall well-being. This session focuses on providing strategies and tools to achieve harmony between work and personal life, ensuring happiness, health, and productivity.

#### Session Highlights:

- Dealing with "Adultitis": Join Jason Kotecki as he shares strategies to overcome "adultitis" and find balance amidst life's challenges. Through engaging anecdotes and powerful imagery, discover practical ways to prioritize joy and reduce stress.
- Wellness and Productivity: Dr. Brian Udermann explores the crucial role of physical activity, nutrition, sleep, and stress management in optimizing productivity and overall well-being.
- Mental Health and Wellness: Gain skills and knowledge to initiate and navigate challenging conversations about mental health and substance abuse in the engineering field. Create a safe and inclusive work environment that prioritizes employee well-being.
- Interactive Delegation Workshop: Participate in an interactive workshop on effective delegation strategies to maximize productivity, reduce stress, and create a healthier work/life balance.

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Develop tools to work smarter and prioritize effectively.
- Identify strategies to reduce stress and enhance energy and productivity.
- Implement personal strategies for positive life changes.
- Acquire delegation skills to optimize productivity and reduce stress.
- Gain practical tips for stress management, health, and nutrition to support overall well-being.
- Address mental health and wellness with compassion and create a supportive work environment.



## GRADUATION

### ACEC Wisconsin Awards Banquet

**Date:** April 24, 2026  
**Location:** The American Club, Kohler  
**Schedule:** 4:30 – 10:00pm

Celebrate your achievements with the Class of 2026, your guests, and firm leaders at the annual Awards Banquet. This event also recognizes ACEC Wisconsin's outstanding volunteers and award-winning projects.



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