

# Lead. Serve. Excel: The Return of the LBA Leadership Academy

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The LBA has reinstated its Leadership Academy, a structured professional development initiative originally launched in 2006. After a multi-year hiatus, the program returns with a renewed focus on preparing mid-career attorneys for leadership roles in law, business and civic life.

The Academy is designed for attorneys with four to ten years of practice. This career stage is critical: practitioners have accumulated substantive experience but are still defining their long-term trajectory. The program addresses this transitional phase by offering targeted instruction in leadership competencies and facilitating strategic professional connections.

## Curriculum Structure

The Academy's curriculum is segmented into modules that build essential leadership skills. Topics include:

- Strategic planning and team building
- Ethics and professionalism in leadership
- Business development strategies
- Community engagement and social responsibility
- Technology and innovation in legal practice
- Change management and diversity integration

Each session is designed to be practical, incorporating case studies, interactive exercises and direct engagement with community leaders. The program emphasizes applied learning over theoretical instruction.

## New Partnership with Leadership Louisville

This year, the Academy introduces a partnership with Leadership Louisville, integrating a session from its "Leading Better" program. This collaboration expands the Academy's scope by exposing participants to leadership methodologies validated across multiple sectors.

## Addressing a Professional Development Gap

The Academy's absence created a noticeable void in regional legal training. Demand for its return reflects a broader recognition that leadership development must be intentional and structured. Informal mentorship and passive learning are insufficient for preparing attorneys to assume leadership roles.

The need is underscored by demographic trends. According to the American Bar Association's 2023 Profile of the Legal Profession, more than half of practicing attorneys in the United States are over the age of 50. Succession planning is no longer optional. Firms, nonprofits and civic institutions require a pipeline of attorneys equipped to lead.

## Impact of Remote Work on Mentorship

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated remote work adoption, which, while operationally effective, diminished opportunities for informal mentorship. A Harvard Business Review study found that remote employees are 25 percent less likely to

receive informal mentoring. In a profession that relies heavily on apprenticeship models, this reduction in spontaneous professional exchange has long-term implications. The Academy's in-person format is a deliberate response to this challenge.

## Leadership and Business Development

Leadership development is directly correlated with business outcomes. Thomson Reuters' 2022 Law Firm Business Leaders Report found that firms investing in leadership training report stronger client relationships and improved associate retention. The Academy equips participants with skills that enhance internal team dynamics and external client engagement.

Graduates gain competencies in communication, team integration and strategic networking. These skills contribute to firm performance and position attorneys for civic leadership roles, including nonprofit board service and bar association committee participation.

## Networking and Relationship Building

The Academy's in-person structure is intentional. Face-to-face interaction fosters trust and accelerates relationship development. According to the Conference Board's 2024 Leadership Development Survey, 73 percent of executives identify relationship building as the most critical leadership competency. However, it is also the skill most weakened by virtual-only environments.

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*The Louisville Bar Association Leadership Academy:  
Building ethical, professional and charitable leaders since 2006.*

**LEAD. SERVE. EXCEL.**

Join the LBA Leadership Academy to sharpen your leadership skills, engage with prominent legal and community leaders and tackle critical professional issues. Designed for attorneys with 4-10 years of experience, this program offers valuable insights into ethics, service and professionalism while connecting you with local non-profits.

**Applications open from Tuesday, October 7 - Friday, November 21. Available at [www.loubar.org](http://www.loubar.org).**

*Apply now to be part of a network dedicated to guiding our legal community with integrity and purpose.  
Program sponsorship available. Contact Lisa M. Murray at [lmurray@loubar.org](mailto:lmurray@loubar.org) for more details or any questions.*

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Each Academy cohort functions as a professional network. Participants often maintain these relationships beyond the program year, creating long-term channels for collaboration and referral.

**Alumni Outcomes**

Since its inception, the Academy has inducted more than 100 attorneys. Alumni have advanced into roles including judicial appointments, firm partnerships and leadership positions within the LBA. These outcomes validate the program's structure and its emphasis on practical leadership development.

**Program Philosophy**

The Academy operates under a clear directive: Lead. Serve. Excel. Its objective is not to produce leaders for title's sake but to cultivate attorneys who lead with ethical clarity, professional rigor and civic responsibility.

Leadership in law requires credibility. Every decision, whether in client representation or board service, reflects on the profession's integrity. The Academy reinforces this principle, framing leadership as stewardship rather than status.

Service is integral to the Academy's mission. Participants are challenged to apply their skills in service to the broader community. Louisville benefits when legal professionals engage in nonprofit leadership, volunteer initiatives and policy advocacy. The Academy positions civic engagement as a professional obligation.

Excellence is treated as a continuous process. The program instills habits of self-assessment and ongoing improvement, encouraging attorneys to refine their skills throughout their careers.

**Strategic Value**

Participation in the Academy offers measurable professional advantages. Structured leadership training accelerates readiness for partnership, firm management and judicial service. Cohort membership provides access to a peer network that supports collaboration and business development.

Leadership skills enhance client confidence and retention. The program also opens pathways to civic visibility through board service and community engagement. The partnership with Leadership Louisville introduces cross-sector leadership strategies, broadening participants' perspective.

The Academy is not a symbolic credential. It is a tactical investment with immediate and long-term returns. Graduates leave with enhanced capabilities, expanded networks and increased credibility.

The reinstatement of the LBA Leadership Academy is a strategic recommitment to the values that sustain the legal profession: integrity, service and excellence. For attorneys in the four-to-ten-year practice window, the program offers a structured path to leadership readiness.

The Academy prepares participants not only to serve clients but to lead firms, nonprofits, and civic institutions. Its return signals a renewed focus on equipping the next generation of attorneys for the responsibilities ahead.

Lead. Serve. Excel. The standard remains unchanged. The opportunity to meet it has returned.

*Lisa M. Murray is the Louisville Bar Association's Director of Professional Development and Leadership. ■*



**UofL Law Library Seeks Alumni Photos**

We are compiling a book detailing the story of the law school throughout the years and we would like to include alumni photographs! If you have pictures from your time in law school that you would like to share, please contact Marcus Walker, the Law School Archivist, at [marcus.walker@louisville.edu](mailto:marcus.walker@louisville.edu) or (502) 852-0171.

Depending on how many are received, we may not be able to include them all, however, preference will be given to those who can provide identifying information along with their photos. Print photographs will be scanned and returned, with the digitized version happily made available to you upon request. (Please do not scan any print pictures, as the publisher has strict guidelines for digitized photographs).

Also, as a reminder, if you have any publications, programs, or other law school ephemera you are no longer interested in keeping, please contact Marcus as the Archives may be interested in having it for the collection! ■



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