



2026-27 LEADERSHIP WHATCOM 9-Month Program Overview of Skills & Practicum Focus Areas

Date & Session Title	Leadership Development	Community Awareness	Communication
SEPT 18, 2026 LW Orientation & Sense of Place	Increase understanding of different leadership styles. Explore principles collaborative leadership.	Overview of Whatcom County and legacies. Increase awareness, sensitivity to all cultures contributing to our community.	Explore stages of team development and transitions. Increase self-awareness of team support and participation habits.
OCT 16, 2026 Justice & Law	Explore ethical leadership through principles and dialogue practices.	Examine the broad spectrum of agencies comprising our law and justice system.	Heighten awareness of personal learning style(s). Practice new approaches to giving and receiving feedback.
NOV 20, 2026 Economic Vitality	Investigate situational leadership strategies for adapting to changing conditions and opportunities.	Explore the economic health of Whatcom County and meet employers that invest in the future of urban and rural communities.	Increase self-awareness of one's listening habits. Practice listening with small and large groups.
DEC 18 2026 Government Systems & the Public Good	Explore principles and practices of transformational leadership.	Identify the elements of healthy communities and multiple approaches to care for the public good.	Improve skills for stimulating participation and building shared knowledge.
JAN 15, 2027 Creating Healthy Community & Meeting Basic Needs	Examine servant leadership approaches and strategies.	Recognize challenges Whatcom residents face in meeting basic needs with dignity in our community.	Improve skills for discussing divergent perspectives and/or values. Form April facilitation practicum teams.
FEB 19, 2027 Education, Research & Innovation	Explore leadership practices that support a culture of innovation.	Celebrate Whatcom County's many institutions of higher learning, life-long education, and innovation pursuits.	Practice staying productive when confused or experiencing conflict. <i>Select topic for practicum dialogue.</i>
MAR 19, 2027 Effective Leaders are Reflective Leaders	Examine principles of facilitative leadership.	Community Case Study about a complex issue in the news. <i>LW Alumni propose topics and tours for exploration and discussion.</i>	Share strategies for achieving the promise of justice for all —families, organizations, and communities in Whatcom County.
APR 16, 2027 <i>*GUESTS*</i> Community Stewardship & Quality of Life	Explore the principles and practices of visionary leadership.	Celebrate the many forms of creativity and caring for the well-being of our communities. <i>Host LW Alumni and guests in a Large Group Dialogue* designed by the LW participants.</i>	<i>* Group Facilitation Practicum.</i> Apply listening and facilitation tools in a community dialogue on a complex issue. Facilitate equitable engagement in a team.
MAY 21, 2027 Putting Leadership Skills into Action – Share Milestones	Reflect on personal leadership goals, journey of learning in LW, and commitment to future action.	Examine the interrelationship and complexities of community issues explored over LW's 9-month program.	Practice skills for evaluating, celebrating, and bringing groups or teams to a place of closure.

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Leadership Whatcom Challenge by Choice Guiding Principles

APPRECIATE the interconnectedness of issues and institutions

VALUE learning as a community

FOSTER civil discussion

TRANSCEND partisanship when working collaboratively

DEVELOP attitudes and skills needed to find common ground

INTEGRATE study, planning, action, assessment, adaptation

BROADEN the base and diversity of leaders in our communities

FOSTER RESPECT and understanding within and among diverse communities

CREATE space to develop leadership, self-awareness, assessment, and growth

UNDERSTAND that action is essential

Facilitation Practicum In April, LW alumni and community guests join LW participants for the afternoon session for a community conversation. Teams of 4-5 participants facilitate a small group discussion based on their own design for the 2.5-hour engagement. In September 2026 through February 2027 LW participants will engage in collaborative thinking and dialogue through a variety of learning activities and community case studies. The generated ideas and shared concerns will be used to identify the April conversation topic.

