



UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND  
EXTENSION



## Statement of Understanding and Code of Ethics

**Revised June 9, 2025**

The LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program is provided through a collaborative effort. The LEAD Maryland Foundation and the University of Maryland Extension—with the support of many other organizations, agencies, businesses, and individuals—work to plan, implement, evaluate, and fund the Fellowship Program, its curriculum and activities. Thank you to all LEAD Fellowship Program partners, funders, participants, and volunteers.

The LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. is dedicated to identifying and developing leadership to serve agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. The LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. has been granted tax-exempt status as a public charity (a type of nonprofit organization) under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code.

Note the following abbreviations used in this document:

LEAD or Foundation	LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc.
UME	University of Maryland Extension
Fellowship or Program	LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program
Fellows	Selected applicants, Fellowship Program participants

The LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program is a "Signature Program" of the University of Maryland Extension. University programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class.

The LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc., (LEAD) trusts that Fellows (selected applicants, program participants) are committed to an educational program of leadership development and will conduct themselves with integrity, in a manner befitting of a leader. ("Befitting of a leader" involves leading by example, being accountable for one's actions, showing respect for others, and making ethical decisions. A leader also communicates effectively, inspires trust, and fosters collaboration among team members. Essentially, it's about embodying the values and behaviors that inspire others to follow and respect your leadership.)

Each Fellowship is the property of LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc., not the individual participant; the Fellowship will be revoked for any breach of this code of ethics.

I, the undersigned, will abide by the specific expectations and responsibilities as outlined below:

1. I understand that by submitting my application to the LEAD Maryland Foundation, I am agreeing to accept the Fellowship awarded, if chosen.
2. The health and safety of all class members, and of those volunteering or working to serve the class, are of primary importance, particularly on any study tours, and during seminar activities.
3. The Foundation spends \$25,000 per person (an estimated minimum) on the education and training provided. Due to the investments of time, financial resources, and in-kind donations, full participation by each Fellow is expected at all seminars and study tours. LEAD Maryland Foundation Board Trustees are provided attendance reports. If participants miss up to two (2) full seminars (or the equivalent hours missed during the Fellowship, including study tours), for whatever reason, it will be brought to the attention of the LEAD Board. The Board then will consider if the participant should be dismissed from the program (not graduate). Full attendance is mandatory at the first seminar and/or orientation.
4. If I am not able to attend the first seminar and/or orientation, or if I am dismissed from the program due to attendance, the full tuition will be charged. There are no tuition refunds. For this reason, if I have a conflict with any of the seminar dates, which are published in advance with the application documents, I will defer my application to a future class.
5. Study tours (unique travel experiences that combine learning with travelling) are an integral component of the program curriculum and full attendance is expected. The LEAD Maryland Foundation Board will address on a case-by-case basis instances where a Fellow does not participate in a study tour. Non-participation in a study tour may be cause for dismissal from the program. The Board, whose decision is final, will decide if the participant missing the study tour will be dismissed.
6. Should a Fellow miss a seminar, study tour, or other class activity for any reasons, the missed seminar, study tour, or activity cannot be made up in any way. LEAD will not supply a replacement seminar, study tour, or event at a future date. There are no tuition refunds. It is important that the Fellow complete the program curriculum with the class in which they were named.
7. I agree to arrive on time, participate fully, and not to leave early or skip meal functions or sessions within the seminars, study tours, or other program events.
8. I understand I will be considered absent from the seminar, even if I am at the seminar site, if I am not in the classroom or participating with the class. (Examples of nonattendance: arriving late, leaving early, spending time on my electronic device and not participating with the class, completing other work in my hotel room, stepping away to take long phone calls.) Attending a seminar means I am physically there and participating; Zooming, Skyping or calling in to seminars are not acceptable ways to participate in in-person seminars, so it is considered being absent.

9. Allowances for missed seminars will only be made for emergencies and other extreme situations that are deemed acceptable by program directors (faculty, staff, appointed responsible person).
10. I agree to sign the daily attendance record provided by the program directors (faculty, staff, appointed responsible person) to help demonstrate my full attendance. I will sign only for myself and will not sign for any of my classmates. I will note times I arrive late, leave early, or am not in full attendance.
11. I understand that program directors (faculty, staff, appointed responsible person) will decide if a seminar may be canceled or have a modified agenda, including possible modified start and end times, because of a significant weather event, a natural disaster, any health and safety issue, other extreme situation, or issues with the hosting site, speakers, and tours.

I understand that if it is not safe to travel from my location to the LEAD seminar because of weather or other safety issue, I am advised to stay off the roads and stay safe until conditions change. The safety of all Fellows and program guests is a priority of the LEAD Maryland Foundation.

Should an emergency arise preventing me from arriving on time to a seminar, or requiring me to leave a location early, I understand that it is my responsibility to inform the LEAD faculty/staff, or if I cannot, to see that someone else informs the LEAD faculty/staff immediately about my emergency or unanticipated situation.

12. If for any reason I anticipate missing any part or activity of a seminar, or if I choose to commute to/from the seminar and not need a guest room at the hotel, I will notify the LEAD faculty/staff at least two weeks prior to the seminar/study tour to assist them in planning rooms, meals, and other details. An email may be sent if communicating two weeks or more in advance of the seminar. A direct phone call or in-person conversation must be made if communicating less than two weeks in advance of the seminar, or during the seminar.
13. Consequences: Class members with non-emergency absentees who fail to properly notify the LEAD office in advance (at least two weeks prior) of the seminar will be invoiced the actual cost equivalent of meals and lodging missed if contracted services (meals, hotel, etc.) cannot be adequately adjusted. (The tuition—paid by the Fellow or paid by a scholarship provider such as an employer or organization—does not apply to the invoiced amount.) Invoices need to be paid promptly to avoid late fees and/or interest. Failure to pay an invoice may be cause for program dismissal.
14. I understand that most costs associated with my participation in the LEAD Program are funded by the LEAD Maryland Foundation with support from various sources of grants and donations, plus the tuition (fee). I will on occasion need to pay for parking, some of my meals, snacks, and beverages, and I am responsible for entertainment costs, incidental or additional expenses I incur (for example, room service, drinks from the bar, hotel room damages). I may need to pay

for my own taxi, ride-hailing, ridesharing, or Metro fare, or other local transportation services. I may need to drive from a conference center/hotel to another location during the seminar.

If I arrive to a seminar or study tour location one or more day(s)/night(s) early, or extend my hotel stay, I am responsible for paying my extra hotel and related travel expenses.

15. I am responsible for purchasing my own ticket, or obtaining a sponsored ticket, to attend the Maryland Agriculture Council's Taste of Maryland Agriculture event, anticipated to be held in February 2027. The LEAD Class will attend this event as a seminar activity. Tickets must be purchased/obtained by January 2027. The Maryland Agriculture Council provides details on their website regarding how to purchase tickets < <https://mdagcouncil.com/>>.
16. Unless permission is clearly communicated to the group in advance, participants are not allowed to bring food and beverages (alcoholic as well as non-alcoholic) to conference centers/hotels because of the health regulations and policies of restaurant establishments. This also applies to "farm fresh products" and "home-baked products" that participants may offer to bring to seminars. Permission from the conference center AND from LEAD Maryland Foundation must be obtained in advance before bringing any food and beverage items to seminars. Should the hosting facility charge LEAD for any food or beverages brought in, serving dishes used, corking fees, or extra cleaning or related services, the expenses will be charged to the Fellow(s).
17. I agree to provide/pay for my own transportation, or to secure a ride or carpool, to/from all seminars, including the seminar held in Washington DC. Transportation costs may include parking fees, tolls, and fare for public transportation, taxis or other ride-hailing and ridesharing services.

The Foundation is not responsible for traffic or parking tickets related to my travel. I am also responsible for transportation to/from regional airports, and any hotel or travel costs needed related to airport travel.

I understand that Fellows may be asked at seminars to volunteer with driving a car pool from the seminar hotel to nearby locations for local tours/events/dinners. I may also on occasion need to pay for other small expenses during the seminars.

18. I understand charter buses are contracted by LEAD Maryland to transport Fellows and program faculty/staff and guests during program field visits and to attend events. For liability, safety, and costs reasons, no program Fellow or guest is allowed to direct or ask the bus driver/company to detour from or add to the pre-approved bus travel itinerary, stops, or routes. Buses are often "classrooms on wheels," and my full attention needs to be given to speakers/guides on the bus, meaning loud discussions and use of electronic devices during bus trips may be limited or restricted.

Consumption of alcohol of any kind is not permitted on the bus. No open containers, or resealable containers, of alcohol of any kind is permitted on the bus.

Charter buses may not always be equipped with restrooms. For longer rides, reasonable breaks will be scheduled at appropriate rest stops with restroom facilities. Fellows are not permitted to request unscheduled stops from the bus driver. In case of an emergency necessitating a stop, Fellows should notify a program director (faculty, staff, appointed responsible person).

19. I understand the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board of Trustees will determine the destination(s) of the study tour. It may be an international and/or domestic study tour.

For the study tour:

I understand that:

- Fellows pay for their own transportation to/from local/regional airports, and pay for airport parking, airport hotels, and related personal travel expenses.
- LEAD pays for the air tickets and the in-country ground transportation costs, (except possibly paying for some taxi and other public transportation such as subways, as may be needed).
- Fellows are responsible for paying checked luggage, carry-on luggage, and excess/oversized/over-weight luggage fees that the airline company may apply.
- Fellows are responsible for paying for any airline ticket seating upgrades they may choose to purchase, if available and offered by the airline company.
- LEAD pays for all lodging (share basis) and some meals, for during the study tour.
- LEAD provides the trip program, interpreters, guides, and admissions.

I understand that:

- All Fellows start and complete the study tour as a group.
- Upon completion of the study tour, I may extend my stay or take a different route home, if the changes in airline tickets or other travel costs do not jeopardize group travel arrangements and rates the Foundation has obtained.
- I am responsible to pay extended travel costs and ticket change fees. I will work with travel planners in advance to meet posted deadlines for arranging and paying for these travel needs.
- The Foundation is not responsible for any travel activities, incidents, or costs of my personal and extended travel.
- I understand the trip is for the Fellows and invited guests/leaders of the Foundation as determined only by the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board. Spouses/guests of the Fellows are not participants of the trip, though they may (at their own expense) meet the Fellows outside of the study tour dates for an extended trip, as long as plans do not create a problem for the group purchase/discounts of travel tickets/arrangements.

20. It is my responsibility to provide and pay for a current passport for international travel and to provide additional “passport type” photos that may be needed for visas or other travel documents. I agree to obtain or renew my passport by December 1, 2026, in preparation of an international study tour. I understand I will need to pay for international visas or entrance/exit fees (if needed).

I am also responsible for paying for any vaccinations, or tests (e.g. Covid tests), or other medical care my health care providers may recommend to me before my travel, or that countries may require for travel. LEAD Maryland Foundation does not provide medical opinions, directives, or advice. Speak with your primary care physician regarding vaccinations or other health matters.

21. As with the seminars, there may be some fees and expenses during international or domestic travel I will need to cover, such as purchases of meals, snacks, souvenirs, international/long distance phone calls, bottled water, personal laundry services, gratuities, etc. LEAD Maryland Foundation does not pay for currency exchange or banking fees.
22. I am responsible for paying the \$5,500.00 tuition (participation fee) by the designated due dates. Tuition payments are accepted at any time after being named to the class and may be paid in advance of the due dates. One tuition invoice will be issued, and it will list all the tuition payment due dates.

One fourth of the tuition (\$1,375) is due on each of the following dates, for a total of \$5,500 to be paid:

Payment Due Date	Amount
February 1, 2026	\$1,375
June 1, 2026	\$1,375
November 1, 2026	\$1,375
<u>April 1, 2027</u>	<u>\$1,375</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>

The Foundation prefers tuition payments by checks. Write and send checks to:

- LEAD Maryland Foundation, 124 Wye Narrows Drive, Queenstown, MD, 21658

Payment of the tuition/fee is not a charitable contribution to the Foundation.

Non-payment of tuition by its due date is a cause for dismissal from the Program, at the discretion of the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board of Trustees.

23. Fellows are encouraged to secure scholarships or sponsorships from community and/or industry sources in advance of the payment due dates to help pay all or a portion of the tuition. Some Fellows secure tuition scholarships from their place of employment, but if the employer does

not pay the tuition, or pays only a portion of the tuition, it is still the responsibility of the Fellow to pay the tuition with personal funds, or from other community sources, they may secure.

**24. The LEAD Maryland Foundation does not bill or contact employers or sponsors directly.**

Fellows are provided one tuition invoice. Fellows may make copies of the invoice and forward to individual tuition sponsors. Fellows are encouraged to thank and communicate with sponsors who have assisted with their tuition fees.

25. LEAD Maryland Foundation will not issue checks directly to Fellows to “reimburse” Fellows who secure tuition support greater than \$5,500.00 in total, nor to “reimburse” Fellows who secure a sponsor after they have already paid the tuition with other funds, including personal funds. If the Foundation receives more funds than due, the overage is considered a charitable donation to the Foundation and a receipt is issued.

26. If I need assistance or have questions regarding my tuition payments, I will discuss this directly with the LEAD Maryland Foundation Executive Director.

27. The LEAD Maryland Foundation, in partnership with the Rural Maryland Foundation and others, offers a scholarship program. Scholarship applications will be provided to all Fellows. Currently, the scholarships, if awarded, will provide only a portion of the tuition.

28. Tuition must be paid in full before travel reservations will be purchased for me for the study tour. Tuition is not reimbursed for missed seminars, study tours, or other program activities. Tuition is not reimbursed if I drop out of the class or if I am dismissed from the class because of attendance, behavior, or other reasons.

29. LEAD Maryland Foundation is not an accredited degree-granting institution and individuals should check with their tax preparer on how to report their fee/tuition paid. Paid tuition is not a donation.

30. I understand, as a participant, that I am asked to commit an estimated minimum of 43 to 45 days to the Program over the Fellowship’s approximately two-year period, starting from the day of applicant interviews, all seminars, the study tour, and to graduation.

Excluding any unforeseen occurrences or changes, I expect to attend an applicant interview, all seminars, a study tour, and graduation if selected. A missed seminar or study tour cannot be made up or substituted in any way. There will be some assignments to complete outside of seminars, including readings and review of seminar materials, some assessments, and possible group or small group work.

31. I have read the program description of the LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program. I understand the requirements for participation in the Program. I agree to support the policies for participation should I be selected. I give my permission for contacting the references supplied and certify that all statements made in my application are true and complete.

32. I understand that not everyone who applies is interviewed. I also understand that the final selection of applicants named to the Class is the sole responsibility of the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board of Trustees.
33. I understand that as a participant of the LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program, I will be exposed to points of view, value systems, allegiances, and individual beliefs, which may or may not agree with my own perspectives. I agree to operate in an environment of mutual respect and tolerance of others and their viewpoints.
34. The LEAD Maryland Foundation is nonpartisan and chooses not to lobby. If I wish to advance a cause with lawmakers or regulators on any level, I will do so representing myself and not the LEAD Maryland Foundation. I will not use class time for my personal or work related legislative or regulatory efforts. I understand the LEAD Maryland Foundation does not endorse the positions or messages of speakers, but does present diverse and at times opposing perspectives on issues, allowing Fellows to learn more and make their own determinations regarding controversial or complex issues.
35. The LEAD Maryland Foundation is grateful to the many granters and to those making contributions to the Foundation and wishes to build positive relationships with all funders. It is understood that beyond supporting the LEAD Maryland Foundation, funders may have opposing views on issues or different ways to approach problem solving. Program funders do not have any reserved seats on the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board or in the class, and do not control the Program curriculum.
36. I agree, while participating in any LEAD activity, to maintain my personal conduct in a manner befitting a leader. I agree to manage my own behavior in a manner that will not damage the reputation of the program, nor be subversive or disruptive to my fellow LEAD participants or any agents of the program.
37. I agree to conduct myself in a manner during all LEAD official functions and meetings, as well as program “unscheduled or free time” that will not discredit my reputation, the reputation of the LEAD Program, or that will keep me from giving my best and full participation the following day.
38. The Foundation is supportive of all value-added agriculture, including craft beverages, breweries, distillers, and wineries, but LEAD Maryland Foundation does not provide/purchase/pay for alcoholic beverages.
39. Firearms, weapons, and explosives are NOT allowed at LEAD Maryland seminars, study tours, or events. I will not carry or transport firearms, weapons, or explosives. I will not have firearms, weapons, and explosives in luggage, hotel rooms and parking lots, conference rooms, buses, or any other locations used by the LEAD Program.



The class visits many government buildings and other public and private properties, businesses, and campuses that ban weapons, ammunition, and other prohibited items.

Small items like penknives are not allowed through security entrances and should not be brought to LEAD seminars.

40. I accept the authority of the LEAD Maryland Foundation Board of Trustees, and any faculty, staff or agent delegated to administer the LEAD program, in all management decision-making processes relating to this Fellowship experience, including during in-state seminars, out-of-state programming, and study tours.
41. Fellows are expected to send written thank you notes/letters following seminars. I understand that speakers, instructors, tour leaders, sponsors, and guests of the LEAD Program are coordinated by the LEAD faculty/staff, board, and appropriately appointed volunteers. Fellows are asked to and expected to thank speakers, at times introduce speakers, and help all invited guests feel welcome and appreciated.
42. If selected to participate in the LEAD Program, I agree to participate in all general activities to the best of my abilities. I agree to serve as a meeting manager, speaker, and introducer, on a rotating basis after the initial seminar, and take on other leadership roles as assigned by the LEAD faculty, including group work. (A meeting manager helps to make introductions, keep the group on time with the printed seminar agenda, and distribute handouts for speakers, or to call on classmates to assist during seminars.) I also agree to prepare and give presentations and complete assignments in a timely manner.
43. I give my permission to LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc., University of Maryland Extension (UME), and the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) to create, use, and publish photographic or video images of me, and/or audio recordings of me, during LEAD seminars and study tours, for educational and promotional purposes. These images and recordings may be exhibited publicly or privately, including posting to official LEAD Maryland and University of Maryland websites and LEAD Maryland Foundation's social media accounts. I understand I will receive no compensation for use of these images, videos or audio recordings.
44. I agree to the use of my name, county of residence or work, titles and affiliations, photograph, and publicity statements that I may make about the program and other reasonable information as may be needed to publicize my participation in this program.
45. Except for LEAD Program events or programs specifically noting the involvement of spouses/significant others/guests/family, I understand that my spouse/guest, children, parents, other family members, co-workers and other people are not permitted to attend LEAD seminars or study tours.

46. I understand that I am expected to share a hotel room with someone of my gender. The LEAD faculty/staff and hotel staff will assign hotel rooms. If I have any concerns about the assigned arrangements, I will immediately have a direct discussion with a Program director.
47. I understand that a graduation for the LEAD Class will be provided as part of the Fellowship Program curriculum. The LEAD Maryland Foundation Board will assign graduation planning and implementation responsibilities to appointed faculty/staff and volunteers, as well assigning roles to the graduating class members.
48. By signing this document, for myself, my child(ren), my spouse, my legal representatives, heirs and assigns, hereby release, waive and covenant not to sue, and further agree to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the following parties: the State of Maryland, University of Maryland, College Park, University of Maryland Extension, LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc., its officers, directors/trustees, class members, volunteers and agents (collectively, the "Parties") from any and all liability to me, my child(ren), my spouse, my legal representatives, heirs, and assigns, for any and all losses or damages resulting from bodily injury, illness, permanent disability, and/or death, whether caused by negligence of the Parties or its officials, employees, volunteers, attorneys, and agents or otherwise, which claims, losses, and demands arise during or as a result directly or indirectly from traveling Internationally, Nationally and within the State on behalf of the LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program.

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Signature:

From the online application form, applicants are asked:

*I have thoroughly read the "LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program Statement of Understanding and Code of Ethics" document as it appears with the application materials on the website ([www.leadmaryland.org](http://www.leadmaryland.org)). By checking the following box, I agree to the terms and expectations described within the "Statement of Understanding and Code of Ethics."*

When applicant responds with, "Yes to agree," and submits their application form, it is acceptable as a signature to this document. No further signed copies are required at this time.

Optional, if required in addition to the application form acceptance:

Signature

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Printed Name

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Date Signed

--end--

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