

Ready to lead with purpose? Offered each spring and fall, the FOCUS Women In Leadership (WIL) program offers the opportunity to refine your personal, professional and civic leadership competencies, learn about the St. Louis community, and connect with other women from across sectors and backgrounds.

Along the way, you'll hone your facilitation, negotiation, and communication skills, explore issues facing our region, and tap into resources to become a more effective leader.

Who Should Apply

Women In Leadership is open to women of all ages with a desire to strengthen their leadership skills and effectiveness. Ideal candidates include mid-level managers, entrepreneurs and community leaders.

Alumnae leave the program with a deeper understanding of themselves and their goals, along with the knowledge, skills, resources and networks to bring those goals to life. You'll also join the network of more than 11,000 FOCUS alumni.

“Women in Leadership was more than a program—it was a life-changing experience that empowered me to walk forward with confidence, purpose, and a renewed sense of self.”

— Marquetta Wise

WHAT TO EXPECT

Curriculum

Program days include a mix of speakers, interviews with regional leaders, small-group discussion, interactive exercises and reflection activities, led by FOCUS' experienced facilitators, subject-matter experts and regional leaders.

While program content is continually evolving to meet the needs of each class, the curriculum covers:

- Leveraging Your Strengths & Emotional Intelligence
- Personal Brand Management
- Negotiation Strategies
- Field Days - Exploring Leadership Across Sectors

Participants also complete a self-directed Personal Leadership Project.

Commitment

The Women In Leadership program consists of four seminars, and three Field Days, giving you the opportunity to immerse yourself in the region, explore different styles of leadership and talk with business, community and civic leaders.

Impact

In a survey of our 2024-25 WIL graduates:

- 100% said they would recommend the program to others.
- 100% felt they left the program better equipped to lead.
- 100% felt they increased their ability to look at issues from multiple angles, seek out new perspectives, and take meaningful action.
- 90% said they had a better understanding and knowledge of negotiation strategies.
- 88% feel more comfortable networking as a result of the program.



“Women In Leadership helped me rediscover my voice — in my personal relationships, in my day-to-day work, and in the industry that I love. I relearned how to speak, and I have a lot to say.” — Tori Rezek

Application Process

Applications for the FOCUS Women In Leadership program can be found online at www.focus-stl.org. Two recommendations are required; a link to the form is available online.

For those interested in learning more, we'll be hosting a virtual Info Session on April 29 from 12-1 p.m.

The application deadline for our Spring 2026 class is Saturday, June 27, 2026. Interviews will take place Saturday, July 25, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

You may also nominate an employee or colleague for the program online, and we will follow up to provide them with the application materials.

Tuition

The tuition for the Women In Leadership program is \$2,500, which includes a complimentary FOCUS St. Louis membership during your time in the program.

Tuition is often covered in part or full by the participant's employer. Partial scholarship assistance is available to those with demonstrated financial need.



About FOCUS St. Louis

Recognized as a national model for civic leadership development, FOCUS St. Louis provides leaders with the civic awareness and powerful connections needed to be collaborative changemakers who advance a thriving region for all.

FOCUS offers a continuum of programs to engage leaders at every stage of their journey, from high school students to senior executives. More than 11,000 individuals have completed our programs, and FOCUS alumni and members are leaders who make a difference – in their workplaces, in their communities and throughout our region.

Change starts with leadership.

Leadership starts with FOCUS.

**FALL 2026
PROGRAM
DATES**

SATURDAY, JUNE 27	Application Deadline	
SATURDAY, JULY 25	Selection Day	8:30-12:30 p.m.
THURSDAY, AUG. 27	Orientation	2:00-5:00 p.m.
FRIDAY, SEPT. 18	Seminar Day	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
THURSDAY, SEPT. 24	Field Day	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
FRIDAY, OCT. 9	Seminar Day	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
THURSDAY, OCT. 22	Field Day	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
FRIDAY, NOV. 13	Seminar Day	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
THURSDAY, NOV. 19	Field Day	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
FRIDAY, DEC. 11	Seminar Day	9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
MAY 2027	FOCUS Now	TBA

Thank You to Our Women In Leadership Supporter!



Foundation

For More Information

Visit www.focus-stl.org or contact Program Director Shalia Ford at shaliaf@focus-stl.org or (314) 657-4021.