



Application - First Community Bank

Youth Leadership Weakley County 2026-27

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS: Both the student applying as well as the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student must complete this application together. To ensure a fair and unbiased selection process, all applications are scored blind, meaning reviewers will not see any identifying information about the applicants. Before applications are reviewed, personal details (such as the student's name, parents' names, or family occupations) will be removed. To help with this process, please avoid including any identifying information in your essay or reference sections. This includes names of the student or their family members, job titles, or other details that could reveal who the applicant is. **Deadline to apply: Friday, September 17th at 5:00 PM.** Please turn in completed form to your school counselor or email completed form to: wcassistant@weakleycountychamber.com.

The First Community Bank of the Heartland Youth Leadership Weakley County (FCBYLWC) program is an exciting opportunity for students who want to build leadership skills, connect with peers across the county, and discover how their local communities and industries work. Throughout the school year, students explore real-world challenges, meet local leaders, and learn how to make a difference. The program introduces them to career paths they may not have considered and helps them develop the confidence and tools that can help them take the lead. Students who complete the program earn a half credit toward high school graduation, make lasting friendships, and gain a network of professionals, business and industry leaders, and elected and appointed officials across Weakley County.

The mission of FCBYLWC is to prepare the next generation of local leaders right here in Weakley County. This program helps students explore the strengths and challenges in each unique community, understand how different industries work together, and learn what it takes to lead, problem-solve, and work as a team. This is a program for students who want to get involved, take initiative, and be part of building a stronger Weakley County.

Thank you to our program's biggest contributor and corporate sponsor, First Community Bank of the Heartland. Additional thanks to our other program's sponsors including Weakley County Schools, Weakley County Municipal Electric System, and many others.

PROGRAM GOALS, ELIGIBILITY, TIMELINE, & FUNDING

The goals of the FCBYLWC program are to:

- Provide in-depth sessions that introduce participants to community needs, resources, challenges, infrastructure, and opportunities.
- Foster leadership skills and a deeper understanding of the community in which students live.
- Encourage civic responsibility and a commitment to taking on leadership roles.
- Expose students to local leadership positions and support them in developing the confidence and skills to step into those roles.
- Inspire students to become active participants in their community and to return and reinvest in Weakley County after completing their education or post-secondary training.
- Reduce the achievement gap by empowering and engaging students from all backgrounds.
- Increase volunteerism and support local community development efforts.
- Connect students with a wide range of career opportunities, including lesser-known industries and career pathways, through interactions with local leaders and professionals.
- Encourage participants to share their experience with their peers and schools.
- Develop a network of emerging young leaders who support and uplift one another throughout high school and beyond.

ELIGIBILITY: FCBYLWC is open to current sophomores at any Weakley County high school. Participants must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher, be in good academic standing, and have no significant attendance or disciplinary issues. Students must also be willing to commit fully to the attendance, participation, and behavior expectations throughout the program. School counselors, teachers, and/or principals must approve all applications that are submitted prior to selection. Parents/guardians must also authorize the student's participation.

WHEN LEADERSHIP MEETS: Applications open in August 2026 and selected students will be notified in September. The program runs from October 2026 through April 2027. Session days begin at 7:50AM and end by 2:00PM so students can return to school in time for dismissal. No sessions will be scheduled on holidays, school breaks, and sessions will be canceled and/or rescheduled in the case of school closures, weather-related or otherwise.

PROGRAM COSTS: The program is offered at no cost to students or families. Program costs are generously covered by First Community Bank of the Heartland, with breakfast and lunch each session provided by various businesses, industries, and organizations.

EXPECTATION OF STUDENT ATTENDANCE: To achieve the goals and mission of the program, students are expected to attend all scheduled sessions. Student commitment is essential. This is a competitive program. Many students apply, but only a limited number are selected. If you know in advance that you'll have conflicts, please be considerate of others and do not apply. The program is made possible by a corporate sponsor. This generous investment in your growth and our community deserves full participation in return. Students receive academic credit for completing the program.

Attendance and engagement make up the majority of the program's grade. Showing up is a big part of how students earn their class credit. This program is governed by a Board of Directors that oversees the experience, ensures program quality, and holds participants to a high standard of commitment and accountability. Athletic, academic, or extracurricular obligations that could conflict with scheduled sessions may prevent students from fully participating. If there's any doubt about a student's ability to attend all sessions, this program may not be the right fit. We understand that illnesses, emergencies, and unexpected situations may arise. In those cases, communication is key. If something unavoidable prevents a student from attending a session, notification is required prior to the session beginning in order for us to excuse the absence and help students stay on track. Commitment matters and is vital for the integrity and impact of the program as a whole.

PARENT AND STUDENT STATEMENTS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

This section must be completed by the parent/guardian and the student applicant. Submission of this application confirms it is being submitted with the full consent and support of the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Student Acknowledgment Statement: As the student applying, I have read and understand the instructions regarding the removal of identifying information in this application. I understand that all applications are scored through a blind review process. I also acknowledge that I have read and agree with the program's mission, goals, eligibility requirements, meeting schedule, cost, and expectations for attendance and participation. I have read, understand, and agree to the Expectation of Student Attendance for the program. I understand that, if I am selected for the program and do not meet the student attendance expectations, I may not receive class credit nor a program completion certificate.

_____ Yes, I have reviewed, understand, and agree. (Student, please initial.)

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Acknowledgment Statement: As the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student applying, I/we have read and understand the instructions regarding the removal of identifying information in this application. I/we understand that all applications are scored through a blind review process and that my child may not be selected to participate in the program. I/we have read and agree with the program's mission, goals, eligibility requirements, meeting schedule, cost, and expectations for attendance and participation. I/we have read the information about the program and understand the commitment on the part of my child. I/we give my full permission to participate in the program. I/we give my permission for my child to be pictured or videotaped for the purposes of documenting and promoting this program. I/we have read, understand, and agree to the Expectation of Student Attendance for the program and understand that, if my child is selected for the program and does not meet the student attendance expectations, my child may not receive class credit nor a program completion certificate.

_____ Yes, I have reviewed, understand, and agree. (Parent or guardian, please initial.)

STUDENT INFORMATION:

1. Full Name (First, Middle, Last): _____

2. Preferred Name (for name tag, newspaper coverage, social media, certificate, etc.):

3. Grade Level: _____

4. School: _____

5. Student GPA (Must be 2.5 or above to be eligible to participate in the program): _____

6. Student Email Address - This is how we communicate session info, so make sure to include one that will be checked often.

7. Student Phone Number – if none, enter N/A: _____

8. Student t-shirt size: _____

9. **IMPORTANT**** - Please list any and all dietary restrictions. If none, please answer "none."

10. **IMPORTANT**** - Please list any and all medical needs. If none, please answer "none."

FIRST PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION – REQUIRED

11. Parent/Guardian Name: _____

12. Relationship to Student: _____

13. Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____

14. Parent/Guardian Email: _____

15. Parent/Guardian Place of Employment (if applicable): _____

16. Parent/Guardian Work Phone Number: _____
(if applicable)

SECOND PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION - OPTIONAL

17. Second Parent/Guardian Name: _____

18. Relationship to Student: _____

19. Second Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____

20. Second Parent/Guardian Email: _____

21. Second Parent/Guardian Place of Employment (if applicable): _____

22. Second Parent/Guardian Work Phone Number: _____
(if applicable)

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Let's talk about the activities and organizations that you are a part of in school as well as the community. Please answer all questions thoroughly using complete sentences to the best of your ability.

23. School Activities (Past 2 Years): List school-related activities, sports, organizations, or clubs in order of importance to you, starting with your top priority. Include your role and how long you participated. Try not to include identifying information such as your name or the names of your family members.

24. Community Activities (Past 2 Years): List non-school and community-related activities or organization involvement, in order of importance to you, starting with your top priority. This could include your efforts volunteering, religious, social, general community involvement, and/or non-school related athletics. Include your role and how long you've participated. Try not to include identifying information such as your name or the names of your family members.

25. Leadership Positions (Past 2 Years) Starting with your top priority of importance, list any positions of leadership that you've held and the affiliated organization or club. Include your role and how long you've participated. Try not to include identifying information such as your name or the names of your family members.

27. Introduce yourself by writing a brief essay. In 300 words or less, tell us about yourself, describe your hobbies, special interests, career goals, and unique attributes. Remember to exclude any identifying info such as your name, family members' names, etc.

[illegible]

28. In your opinion, what is the most significant issue or challenge that high school students face? Can you offer any solution(s)? Exclude identifying information such as your name or family members' names.

29. List qualities or features you appreciate most about your community and/or Weakley County.

30. List challenges facing your community and/or Weakley County, and list any ideas for solutions you have.

31. Why are you applying for the 2026 First Community Bank Youth Leadership Weakley County program? What do you hope to gain from your participation and the experience?

32. List the most important characteristic(s) or trait(s) that you believe a leader should possess and justify your answer.

33. If you could hold a leadership role across any sector in your community, Weakley County, or West Tennessee - what would it be and why? What would you change?

34. Which session listed on the schedule interests you most? What do you hope to get out of it?

35. If you could spend a day with a world leader, sports star, cultural figure, or historical figure, who would you choose and why?

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Student submitting this application understands and agrees with all program guidelines, will attend class sessions, will participate in the completion of the assigned group community service project, and will act with exemplary behavior as a selected youth leader throughout the sessions in the program.

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature
