



Community Leadership Academy Berrien County **Residents from Niles, Niles Charter Township, Buchanan and Buchanan** **Township, Michigan (49120 & 49107 Zip Codes)**

Become a Leader in Your Community!

Are you passionate about making a difference in your community? Do you want to build your leadership skills, connect with like-minded residents, and learn how to create lasting change in Berrien County? The Community Leadership Academy (The Academy) is a 12-week program designed to empower and equip everyday residents with the knowledge, tools, and connections to lead community change, become effective community leaders, and create safer and healthier communities. This program aims to support emerging leaders willing and ready to engage and collaborate with diverse stakeholders, including local government, businesses, and nonprofits. This academy is a chance to grow your confidence, strengthen your voice, and turn ideas into action.

After the 12-week program, participants will complete a Community Improvement Project (CIP), which may take 3–12 months or longer depending on the CIP and cohort decisions.

United Way of Southwest Michigan and Corewell Health are looking for Berrien County residents residing in **Niles, Niles Charter Township, Buchanan and Buchanan Township, MI**, who are ready to invest in themselves and their communities. If that sounds like you—**we encourage you to apply!**

Eligibility Requirements — To participate, here's what we're looking for:

- Be a resident **of Niles, Niles Charter Township, Buchanan and Buchanan Township (49120 & 49107 Zip Codes)** and be committed to the betterment of their neighborhood and surrounding areas.
- Demonstrate a history of community involvement, such as participation in local events, organizations, or volunteer activities.
- Have a strong interest in developing leadership skills and taking an active role in community improvement.
- Be willing to engage fully in the 12-week Community Leadership Academy. Sessions are 3 hours, include dinner, and regular attendance is strongly encouraged.
- Commit to working with cohort members to complete a Community Improvement Project. Please note, duration dependent on selected project.
- Be willing to work with a broad range of people and perspectives to foster a stronger, more inclusive community.
- Be committed to transparency, honesty, and integrity in decision-making and community engagement.



- Collaborate and learn with others to develop, plan, and execute neighborhood projects that empower the community.
- Have strong communication skills, or willingness to develop these skills, to effectively advocate for the community, communicate with stakeholders, and mediate conflicts.

If you are ready to grow as a leader, identify challenges within the community, and want to find innovative solutions to improve quality of life, the **Community Leadership Academy** is for you. Together, we are building stronger neighborhoods, creating lasting change, and shaping the future of our community. **Join us!**

TIMELINE

Application	Rolling basis through April
Virtual Interview	Rolling basis through April
Program Begins	Thursday April 30, 2026
Program Conclusion	Mid July. 2026
Community Celebration	End of July 2026

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Complete this application form in full. Incomplete applications may not be considered.
- **Submit your application to behealthyberrien@gmail.com**
- Selected applicants will participate in a virtual interview.
- Selected participants will be notified following the interview.
- For additional details visit behealthyberrien.org/CLA

APPLICATION FORM

Full Name:

Address:

Date of Birth:

Phone Number:

Email Address:





9. Scheduling Availability: are you able to participate in sessions that are typically held on Thursday evenings and/or weekends?

- Yes
- No
- Possibly — please share anything that would help us understand your participation:

10. Transportation Access: do you currently have reliable transportation for attending Thursday evening in-person sessions?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes — please share anything that would help us support your participation:

11. Childcare Needs: would having childcare support help you attend in-person sessions?

- Yes
- No
- Possibly — please tell us more about what would be helpful:

12. Technology Access: do you have access to a computer and feel comfortable using it for program activities?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe — please share any support that would help you participate:

13. References: Please provide the name and contact information for someone who can speak to your character and or leadership potential.

Name:

Relationship:

Contact Number and email Address:



Demographic Information

1. What is your ZIP code?
2. How many people, including yourself, live in your household?
3. Which of the following best describes your age?
 - 18 or under
 - 19-29
 - 30-45
 - 46-60
 - 61+
 - Prefer not to say
4. What gender do you most identify with?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Transgender
 - Non-binary/Third gender
 - Prefer to self-describe: _____
 - Prefer not to say
5. How would you best describe your race or ethnicity?
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Some other race, ethnicity, or origin:
 - Prefer not to say
6. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 - No
 - Yes – Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
 - Yes – Puerto Rican
 - Yes – Cuban
 - Yes – Other (please specify): _____

United Way of Southwest Michigan and Corewell Health are proud to support the Community Leadership Academy, empowering residents with the skills, connections, and resources needed to lead meaningful change in their communities.