

First and foremost, thank you for all you do every day to ensure your students are thriving. Everyone at Leadership Jacksonville extends our heartfelt gratitude for serving as caring adults for thousands of students daily. We hope you had an abundant and gratitude filled Thanksgiving holiday.

Second, it has been great to hear from many of you over the past few months as we've transitioned from the seasoned hands of Mrs. Meg Folds. Thank you for patience while our team took a few months to strategize about the next Youth LJ experience. Today we are excited to announce that the Youth LJ Application process is officially underway. So, ladies and gentlemen, please start your engines – You are officially cleared to recruit for the Youth LJ 2026 Cohort!

### **Updated Materials This Year**

**Our website is now updated to reflect program details for next year.**

- You will find both a fillable PDF of both the updated application and adult reference forms.
- Additionally, there is a requested poster that you can print and write your school specifics details too to easily promote. \*Please let me know if other promotional materials are desired (social media posts, newsletter graphics, etc.)
- Available online for download at: <https://www.leadershipjax.org/programs/youth-leadership-jacksonville/>

### **Application Timeline for this year**

Based on your insights and feedback, we know that students need time to complete the application over long weekends and/or breaks. We have also heard that too long of an application window decreases participation/motivation. So, we embraced these insights and have shifted the two-month application window back to accommodate both winter break and MLK Day weekend.

- First Week December – Application and Promotional Materials Available to School Liaisons
- Mid-January - School Determined Deadline for Internal Review
- Mid-to-Late January – School Interviews/Review Panel (as needed) \*
- Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup> @ 3pm – Deadline for Schools to Submit their Slate of Applicants \*
- Mid-February – Notification of Student Interview Stage. Please note that due to the increasing interest and demand for this program, we cannot guarantee all nominated will receive an interview. We will notify all nominated whether they will proceed to the interview stage.
- Late-February / March – Student Interviews with Youth LJ Selection Panel
- By April 11, 2025 – Notification of Acceptance / Decline to Youth LJ Class of 2026.
- Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup> – Parent/Student Orientation for Youth LJ Class of 2026.

\*As a reminder, each school campus can nominate up to 3 female and 3 male students (a max of 6 candidates). Some schools need to hold internal application reviews to narrow down their candidate pool.

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Should you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please contact Tom Caron at [tom@leadershipjax.org](mailto:tom@leadershipjax.org).