



HILL COUNTRY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



Local leaders
Regional challenges
Real solutions
Lasting relationships

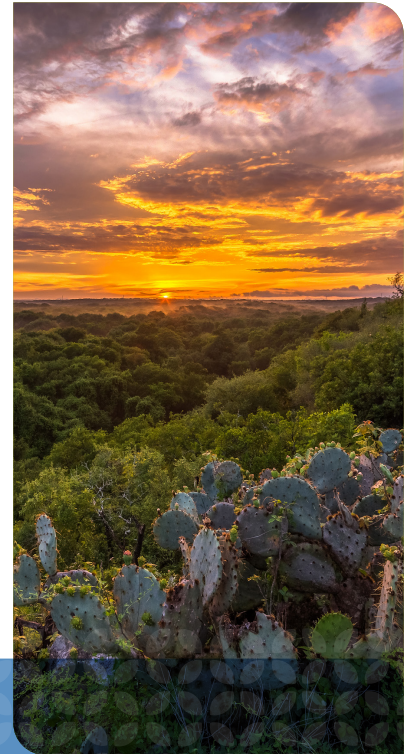
The Hill Country is a region unlike any other in Texas—full of natural features, treasured places, charming communities, and a rich heritage. Today, the region faces numerous threats driven by rapid growth, land fragmentation, and unchecked development.

The Hill Country needs locally driven and balanced solutions to protect the ecological and economic health of this place we call home. Yet very few opportunities exist for leaders to connect, share, and generate new ideas.

For this reason, the Hill Country Alliance has developed a new leadership program especially for decision makers and elected leaders throughout the Texas Hill Country.

The **Hill Country Leadership Institute** is designed for city council members, county judges and commissioners, groundwater conservation district board members and general managers, and anyone serving in a public leadership role.

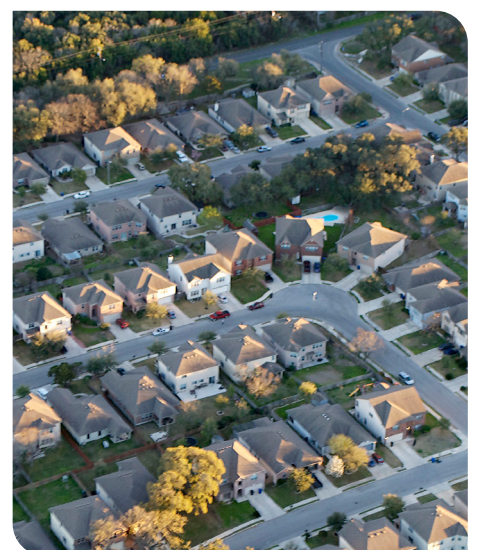
Past and present elected leaders, subject matter experts, and other professionals were involved in development of the Leadership Institute, and the inaugural class launched in January 2023.



Our purpose is to engage, empower, connect, and inspire local leaders dedicated to the long-term vitality of our unique 17-county region.

Participants can expect both professional and personal benefits.

- Develop strong, lasting relationships across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Discover what is working and what is not working in other communities.
- Learn from experts in an intimate and inspiring setting.
- Engage in problem solving and avoid the need to reinvent the wheel.
- Create actionable strategies for our region's most pressing issues.
- Participate in honest, trusted conversations about what is possible and what is needed.
- Take away tools—including model policies, funding opportunities, and case studies—ready to be put to work in your community.



Plan for the 2026 Hill Country Leadership Institute

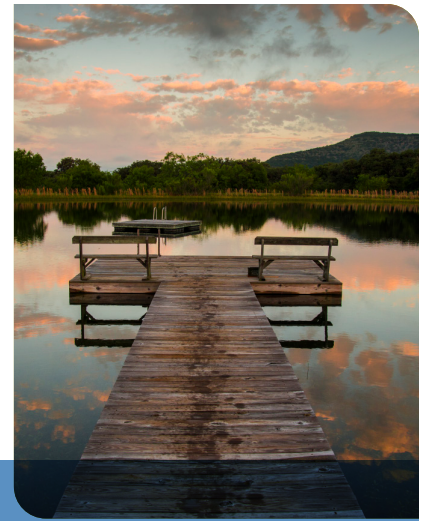
- The educational program will run for ten months—from January through October 2026.
- We will gather in person every third Thursday of the month at unique locations across the region.
- The first gathering is set for January 22, 2026, from 9am to 2pm at Selah Bamberger Ranch Preserve in Blanco County.
- Maximum enrollment is 20 to deliver a personalized enriching experience.
- One full-day retreats is included for on-the-land learning in spring and fall.
- Brief topics to be offered as virtual lunch-and-learn sessions.
- Scheduled “office hours” are planned for deeper learning and one-on-one discussions.
- Breakout groups will be created to dive deeper on topics of interest.
- Ongoing engagement for three years beyond the conclusion of the program is encouraged and supported.
- Sliding scale enrollment from \$500 to \$1,000 depending on size of population served.

Core curriculum topics

- **Water infrastructure:** Long-range thinking about drinking water supply for our growing population. Sustainable and innovative wastewater solutions. Protecting pristine streams. One Water strategies. Regional water planning processes.
- **Development oversight:** The costs of sprawl vs planning for density close to existing infrastructure. Conservation development. Low-impact development. Development agreements. Special purpose districts.
- **Groundwater:** Groundwater management. Loss of springs. Working with groundwater conservation districts and understanding their Chapter 36 authority. Groundwater Management Areas and “Desired Future Conditions.”
- **Planning:** Extents and limits of county authority. Municipal planning tools. Thoroughfare plans. Habitat conservation plans. Comprehensive planning and regional planning opportunities.
- **Land stewardship and conservation:** The land/water connection in the Hill Country. Private land stewardship opportunities. Conservation easements. Public funding for conservation.

Additional focus areas

Public health	Broadband infrastructure	Night skies
Workforce development	Heritage protection	Tourism
Workforce housing	Water quality	Working with TCEQ
Economic development	Incompatible land use	Industrial activities



The 2026 class of the Hill Country Leadership Institute is forming now!

Application and additional information are available at hillcountryalliance.org/leadershipinstitute

Applications are encouraged on or before November 15, 2025

For more information, contact Leah Cuddeback, leah@hillcountryalliance.org

The Hill Country Leadership Institute is a program of the Hill Country Alliance.

Hill Country Alliance is a 501c3 non-profit established in 2004, bringing together a diverse coalition of partners to preserve the open spaces, starry night skies, clean and abundant waters, and unique character of the Texas Hill Country.

