



EMPOWER DECORAH

The Empower Decorah Class Series is led by the Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce in Decorah, Iowa. This program is available to chamber members and well-suited for young professionals who are new to their business/organization and would benefit from leadership training, learning more about the Decorah area, and increasing their connections with other professionals. New residents and individuals new to the role as manager will also find benefit. A translator option is available for those who do not speak English as their first language.

To submit yourself or your employee for consideration, please visit the chamber's website and complete the application form online or contact chamber staff directly. A maximum of 20 individuals will be accepted into the 2026 program. Cost is \$500 per individual which covers all classes and materials.

PROGRAM PILLARS



**THE CLASS LEARNS ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC SERVICES, AREA NONPROFITS, THE LOCAL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM, AND SOCIOECONOMIC / WORKFORCE ISSUES SPECIFIC TO THIS PLACE.
GOAL: BE A MORE INFORMED RESIDENT.**



**CLASS MEMBERS CONNECT W/ 50+ NEW PROFESSIONALS INCLUDING PEERS, AREA LEADERS, ENTREPRENEURS, EXPERIENCED BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES, ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND THOSE WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THEIR AREAS OF EXPERTISE.
GOAL: INCREASE CONNECTEDNESS**



**INFORMED PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE CONNECTED ARE MORE LIKELY TO SHARE THEIR TALENTS, SERVE ON BOARDS, VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME, AND SHAPE THE AREA'S QUALITY OF LIFE. THE CLASS IS INTRODUCED TO OPPORTUNITIES. THEY ALSO COMPLETE A SMALL GROUP PROJECT THAT CONTRIBUTES TO DECORAH'S AESTHETIC.
GOAL: EMPOWER ENGAGEMENT**



**LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND TOOLS ARE IMPORTANT IN EVERY WORKPLACE. THIS CLASS COMPLETES GALLUP STRENGTH FINDER AND COMPLETES SMALL GROUP WORK TO BETTER UNDERSTAND TEAM DYNAMICS, THE ROLE OF PERSONALITIES, AND HOW THE BEST LEADERS NAVIGATE CHALLENGES.
GOAL: ENHANCE LEADERSHIP**

The Empower Decorah Class Series is generously supported by



Assessments

Class participants will complete **Gallup CliftonStrengths Assessment**, and the **NERIS Analytics Limited 16 Personalities Test**. The Chamber provides access codes/information ahead of the course. These tools benefit the individual, the team as a whole, and can be applied/used in any workplace.

Outside Class

Participants read the book **Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, And Why People Follow By Tom Rath Barry Conchie**. Books are provided to participants. During the class series, **participants will watch a recorded public meeting that is relevant to the class material.**

Public Art Class Project

The 2026 class will be supporters for a small, **new public artwork, as part of the Postage Stamp Series**. Chamber staff secure a location and select the artist. Class participants review and select the final design. When the artwork is complete, a Ribbon Cutting event will be held and class participants are invited.

In-Person Classes

Class One: Individual Strengths & Strengths on a Team Thursday, May 7th (830AM - Noon)

at Viking State Bank 2nd Floor Conference Room

Gallup Strengths Finder w/ Luther College Career Center Director - Sarah Crose
Group Work - Strengths as Individuals, Strengths in a Team

(Optional Social) Chamber Gala Event Friday Night April 24th at Impact Coffee (630PM - 9PM)

Class participants get a complimentary ticket for themselves and a guest
Black-tie fundraiser for the Chamber organization. 2026 Theme: CLUE

Class Two: Leadership in Business Thursday, June 18th (830AM - Noon)

at Viking State Bank Conference Room

Small Group Work / SWOT Analysis for Decorah

Small Business Owners Panel: Leadership in Business & Beyond

Postage Stamp Art Selection w/ Artist

Class Three: Death & Taxes Thursday, August 6th (830AM - Noon)

at Viking State Bank Conference Room

NERIS Analytics Limited 16 Personalities Test

Presentation by Author David Faldet on the History of Decorah

Presentation by City Manager Travis Goedken on Local & State Taxes

Class Four: Leadership in Service to Community Thursday, October 29th (830AM - Noon)

at Viking State Bank Conference Room

Leadership in Service to Community Panel

Parliamentary Procedure, Group Work | Board Meeting Practice

(Optional) Ribbon Cutting for New Public Artwork

Immediately following the conclusion of Class 4



2025 Empower Class Participants:

Seth Boyes, Decorah Leader
Kelsey Vanney, Magpie Coffeehouse
Jonathan Specht, Miller Law Office
Brittany Wills, Barthell Eastern Star Nursing Home
Mary Conway, Viking State Bank
Allison Gehling, Viking State Bank
Cydney Weitzel, DecorahNews.com
Mallory McArtor, Decorah Parks & Recreation
Erica Dahl, Aase Haugen Senior Service
Ashley Baumler, Decorah Bank & Trust
Erica Knutson, Decorah Bank & Trust
Will Marx, Decorah Police Department
Zach Wegmann, Anderson Law Office
Blair Shaffer, Vesterheim Museum
John Reynolds, Assured Partners
Gabriel Vilardo, Kerndt Brothers
Jackie Duden, Guardians of Northeast Iowa

2024 Empower Class Participants:

Anshuman Behera, Stanley Engineered Fastening
Holly Benda, Sunflower Discovery & Child Development Center
Luke Bergey, KAR Auto Group
Rygar Carvajal, Collins Aerospace
Ariana Cervantes, Decorah Hy-Vee
Crystal Elsbernd, Decorah Bank & Trust
Taylor Lensing, Decorah Bank & Trust
Jenna Mockler-Gerde, Dragonfly Books
Maddie Putnam, Winneshiek Co. Development & Tourism
Alex Rosenow, Decorahnews.com
Keri Sand, City of Decorah
Miriam Skrade, Luther College
BreAnna Sovereign, WinnMed
Nolan Stepanek, Collins Aerospace
Michael Suarez, Luther College
Alejandra Cruz, Luther College
Caleb Terhune, Collins Aerospace

2023 Empower Class Participants:

Christopher Miculinich, Eastern Star
Allie McIntyre, Iowa State Extension
Chad Mills, Decorah Bank & Trust
Cole Phillips, Decorah Bank & Trust
Kia Burreson, Agora Arts
Madeline Jungbauer, Luther College
Blake Moen, Decorah Parks and Rec
Alyssa Ritter, Northeast Iowa RC&D
Isaac Luzum, Viking State Bank
Rachael Palmer, Viking State Bank
Manny Pollard, Prairie Lakes Church
Megan Giorgenti, Iowa DNR
Kristin Eggen, Seed Savers Exchange
Ray Rinkol, Trial Lawyers for Justice
Stephanie Fromm, Winneshiek Co. Development
Jenny Harman, Harman Realty
Amber Kuennen, Luther College
Torie Moellers, Collins Aerospace
Karen Quam, Collins Aerospace
Evan Neubauer, Winneshiek Co. Conservation
Maggie Schwartz, Winneshiek Co. Conservation
David Robinson, Kerndt Brothers Bank
Andrew Ellingsen, Vesterheim Museum

2022 Empower Class Participants:

Siri Steven, The Getup
Keegan Steinlage, Kelly Real Estate
Blake Courtney, Viking State Bank
Tricia Crary, Decorah Public Library
Hannah Pearch, Viking State Bank
Kelsey Schmitt, Viking State Bank
Jeanne Gullekson, Dave Kelly Real Estate
Cole Steffan, Decorah Bank & Trust
Kaley Benzing, Viking State Bank
Susan Schnur, Collins Aerospace
Devin Ingvalson, Collins Aerospace
Ashley Hovey, Collins Aerospace
Maren Kraling, Collins Aerospace
Mary Ann Fober, Collins Aerospace
Michele Budde, Collins Aerospace
Olivia Syverson, Rendered Unique
George Miles, Stanley Engineered Fastening
Nicholas Engrav, Marine Credit Union
Linnea Rahlf, Decorah Bank & Trust
Natalie Naber, Convergence Ciderworks
Hannah Tulgren, Pulpit Rock Brewery
Ryan Burras, Eschelon Partners