



Class 22

Orientation/Interview Information

A program of the Rural Ontario Institute

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Introduction to the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP)

History of AALP

AALP was established in 1984, through the work of four partners – the University of Guelph, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Foundation for Rural Living. The program was created for those who want to broaden their horizons, expand their networks and help shape the future of the agriculture and food sectors in Ontario. The Rural Ontario Institute has delivered AALP since 2010.

What is AALP?

- AALP is an 18-month experiential executive leadership program for individuals who want to shape the future of the agriculture and food industry and make a positive difference in rural communities across Ontario.
- AALP challenges participants to think bigger, dig deeper, lead with confidence, and build meaningful connections with people who are driving change across the agri-food sector.

Participants increase the effectiveness of their leadership through:

- Exposure and experience through application of the best practices in leadership.
- Gaining broader knowledge of the agri-food industry and social structure in a global context.
- Networking with peers, industry, government leaders provincially, nationally and internationally.
- Improving self-confidence and enhancing positive attitudes for the future.
- Seminars, webinars and study tours focus on core leadership skill development, networking with key influencers, exposure to the innovative agri-food system and the economic, political, social, cultural and physical environment in which it operates.
- **Delivered over two fall/winter periods, participants take part in:**

Program Component	Qty	Approximate Time	Notes
In-person Seminars	7	3 to 5 days each	Seminars are held in different locations across Ontario and will include on-site farm/industry/cultural visits.
North American Study Tour	1	7 to 10-days	Understanding Canadian/North American Relations (Destination: TBD)
International Study Tour	1	10 to 14-days	Strengthening Global awareness (Destination: TBD)
Webinars	7	2.5 hours each	Webinars will be held over ZOOM.
Issue Analysis Projects (IAPs)/Group Projects	1	TBD (This will depend on project topic and scope)	A team-based leadership project intended to increase critical thinking, team/task/time management.

			Working with representatives of selected agri-food and rural organizations, on issues of importance, class teams (3 to 5 individuals) will analyze the issues and present concepts, ideas and options for change. <i>Groups have worked with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, 4-H Ontario, Ontario Agricultural College, Ag Women's Network, Beef Farmers of Ontario, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO), Fresh Vegetable Growers of Ontario (FVGO), Indian Agricultural Program of Ontario (IAPO), Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians (OAVT), Ontario Livestock and Poultry Council (OLPC), Farm & Food Care Ontario, Rural Ontario Institute</i>
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Note: Minor additional homework may be required throughout the program.

AALP's Impact

AALP is designed to fast track your potential. Achieve the insight and network that would normally take a decade to achieve in approximately 45 days of in-session training. There's no other program that will impact your life and community more.

Our impact:

- Over 42 years of developing top leaders.
- Over 540 AALP alumni build a local to global network. Graduates hold leadership roles across the entire agri-food system, including farm operations, government, finance, education and commodity organizations.
- Providing over 10,000 networking opportunities per Class.
- Over 50% of AALP graduates moved into more senior leadership roles.
- Advisory roles quadrupled after graduation – AALP grads are trusted voices that shape decisions across Ontario.
- 70% of AALP alumni volunteer, compared with 41.5% of Ontarians.

Who takes part in AALP

- Classes are made of up to 30 participants. Ages from mid 20's to late 50's. Class participants are chosen for their different backgrounds, offering unique viewpoints and enabling thought-provoking, balanced discussion of critical issues. Education ranges from high school diploma to PhD.
- Industries AALP participants represent include:
 - Farmers
 - Agri-business employees/partners
 - Food processors & retailers
 - Bankers
 - Educators
 - Civil Servants
 - Journalists
 - Marketers

Tuition Cost - \$13,000.00 (plus administrative fees)

- Tuition is tax-deductible and is payable in up to 2 installments, July and April by E-transfer, Cheque, Visa or MasterCard.
- Class members will also pay a registration and administration fee to the University of Guelph of approximately \$130.00/yr for tuition processing.
- If paying by credit card, class members will also pay a credit card administration fee of approximately \$190.00/yr.
- Tuition covers many expenses except transportation to and from seminars, study tour start & return points, country entrance visa fee, vaccinations, some meals, gratuities, hospitality and other incidentals.
- The cost participants pay is about 1/3 of the total cost of the program. Gratitude goes to program and industry partners and sponsors that make this support possible by contributing financially to the program as well as private corporations, rural and agricultural organizations and interested individuals through regular donations and fund-raising campaigns.
- Class members are expected to participate in, and contribute where possible to various fund-raising campaigns, activities and initiatives, including a minimum of one event as participant and one as alumni in the year after graduation.

Time & Financial Commitment

- Approximately 45 seminar/webinar days over 18-months dedicated to formal group study (both in-person & virtually) plus approximately 22 travel study tour days.
- In addition, time for travel to/from seminars is anticipated.
- Further time in independent study analyzing a specific issue through an Issue Analysis Group Project.
- Preparation for seminars (background reading/ daily chair or other duty preparations).
- Follow-up after seminars and tours (blog posts and thank you letters).
- Additional time spent promoting AALP events and fundraising, including a minimum of one event as participant and one as alumni in the year after graduation.
- \$3000 to \$5000 in additional personal expenses over tuition (gratuities, travel visa/vaccinations/passport/insurance, hospitality, some meals, tourism and other miscellaneous items).

Fundraising

Fundraising is critical to keeping tuition affordable and supporting ongoing program needs. AALP participants and recent graduates are responsible for raising funds throughout the program.

As an AALP participant you will take part in the following fundraising events:

Event	Description
AALP Dream Gala or other keystone event organized by the Class participants	- The AALP Dream Gala is a biennial event that brings together hundreds of Ontario agriculture leaders in support of ROI and AALP, with an emphasis on the current class. Current AALP participants work with the most recent graduating cohort to plan and host the event. Historically, the gala has featured a live and silent auction, with AALP alumni donating unique items and experiences to show their support for the program. - The 2026 AALP Dream Gala raised over \$110,000 in fundraising support of AALP and the Rural Ontario Institute.
AALP Leadership Lecture and Recruitment	- Held every second March/April in conjunction with the final seminar (March 2027) - Class participants are encouraged to help sell tickets and to invite those interested in participating AALP Classes as a future participant and/or as a program sponsor.
Class Fundraising	- Historically every class has its own fundraising campaign – raising between \$2500 and \$11,000 for the next class. - Ideas have included fines, raffles, auctions and the sale of CD's or books. Class 9 initiated a baseball tournament that was held in August for over 5 years. Class 13 initiated a 'Fun-draising' Curling Bonspiel and Class 18 held raffles.

Applicant Interviews (Feb 2027)

Virtual interviews will be held for applicants across the province. The selection committee will ask the same questions of all applicants to assess their:

- Leadership potential after the program
- Open-mindedness and vision
- Linkages to the rural, agriculture and agri-food community
- Demonstrated leadership ability
- Breadth of perspective on rural issues
- Support from personal and business networks
- Level of respect in their community and business

References may be called following the interview process.

Provincial Selection (Apr/May 2025)

The AALP Recruitment Team will select Class participants based on their applications, the results from the regional interviews, geographic location and demographics. Each Class is created with attention to the diversity of participants so that peer-to-peer mentorship, hands on experience and a broad network are developed. Representation will be sought based on age, gender, location, occupation, agricultural commodity or sector and rural community representation.

Notification of Selection Results & Participant Acceptance (Apr/May 2025)

All candidates will be notified shortly after the provincial selection by telephone and written correspondence.

Get Ready to Start Your AALP Journey

Class 22 (2027-2029) begins August 2027.

Upon acceptance, participants commit to:

- Attend and fully participate in **ALL** seminars, study travel sessions, and other virtual activities as required.
- Set aside time outside of formal sessions to prepare for and follow-up from seminars and study tours (background reading, daily notes, thank you letters, sponsorship introductions etc.)
- Complete an Issue Analysis Project or other group project as identified. The time commitment can vary from 25 hours to 80 hours.
- Pay tuition fees, administration fees, transportation costs to and from Ontario seminars, study tour start and return points, country entrance visa fee, vaccinations, gratuities, hospitality and some meals.
- Be proactive ambassadors of the program, help promote and support fundraising activities.
- Provide leadership in the agricultural, agri-food and rural community upon completion of the program.