

100 BLACK MEN OF THE UPSTATE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

VOLUME I

Executive Leadership Proposal

Prepared for the Executive Board, President, Vice President of Programs,
Community Partners, and Funders

“Leading Today. Changing Tomorrow.”

Office of the Director of Mentoring
Document 1 of 4 — Leadership Academy Operating Manual Suite

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1. Executive Summary

The 100 Black Men of the Upstate Leadership Academy is a structured, two-cohort youth development program that transforms our chapter's long-standing commitment to mentoring into a repeatable, board-governed system. This proposal asks the Executive Board to formally charter the Academy as the organization's flagship mentoring platform and to adopt the accompanying Curriculum & Facilitator Guide, Scholar & Mentor Handbook, and National Leadership Capstone Guide as its operating standards.

The Academy exists to close a specific and measurable gap: too many of the young people our chapter is positioned to serve are graduating without the leadership skills, financial literacy, and professional exposure that determine long-term life outcomes. Our members already have the relationships, the credibility, and the community standing to close that gap — what has been missing is a documented, transferable system that survives leadership transitions and scales with demand.

The ask: Board approval to (1) formally charter the Leadership Academy under the Genesis and Legacy Cohort model, (2) adopt the four-volume operating manual as chapter policy, and (3) approve the first-year budget outlined in Section 12.

2. Why We Exist

Community Need

Across the Upstate, African American youth continue to face a compounding set of barriers to opportunity: under-resourced schools, limited access to professional networks, and a scarcity of consistent, invested adult role models. These are not new challenges for our chapter — they are the reason 100 Black Men of America was founded in 1963 and the reason our local chapter exists today. What has changed is the urgency: without an intentional pipeline of leadership development, the young people we could be reaching age out of eligibility having received sporadic mentoring rather than a sustained, developmental experience.

Data

100 Black Men of America's national mentoring model — Mentoring the 100 Way — reaches youth ages 8 to 18 across the network and, together with the organization's full slate of programs, touches more than 125,000 underserved youth annually. That scale demonstrates the model works; it also underscores the gap between national reach and the structured, curriculum-driven experience an individual chapter can offer without a formal Academy in place. The Leadership Academy is our chapter's answer to that gap — taking a proven national mission and giving it a documented, locally executable delivery system.

Our Opportunity

The Upstate chapter has the mentor base, the community credibility, and the partner relationships to run a leadership program at a level few youth-serving organizations in the region can match. What we have lacked is not capability but infrastructure: a shared curriculum, a consistent mentor playbook, and a clear scholar journey that any future Director of Mentoring can pick up and run without rebuilding it from scratch. This proposal closes that gap.

3. Vision

A community in which every Upstate scholar who enters the Leadership Academy graduates with the confidence, character, and competence to lead — in the classroom, in their career, and in their community — and returns, in time, as a mentor to the next generation.

4. Mission

To develop African American youth into principled, capable leaders through a structured two-year leadership curriculum, sustained one-on-one mentoring, and hands-on community leadership experience — delivered by 100 Black Men of the Upstate in partnership with scholars, mentors, and families.

5. Leadership Academy Philosophy

The Academy is built on a simple premise: leadership is a taught skill, not an inherited trait. Every academy session pairs a leadership principle with a concrete, practiced application — a discussion, an exercise, a mentor conversation, a real assignment — so that scholars leave with more than inspiration. Three commitments anchor the model:

- Consistency over intensity — a predictable monthly rhythm of academies, mentor contact, and family engagement builds trust faster than occasional high-energy events.
- Practice over lecture — every principle is reinforced through role-play, case study, or a real deliverable, not passive instruction.
- Documentation over improvisation — a written curriculum, mentor playbook, and handbook mean the Academy's quality does not depend on any single volunteer's memory.

6. Two-Cohort Model

Scholars enter one of two annually running cohorts, each carrying its own identity and developmental focus rather than a generic numeric label:

- **Genesis Cohort — Identity, Foundation, and Leadership.** The entry point for new scholars, focused on self-awareness, character, and the foundational habits of leadership.
- **Legacy Cohort — Service, Influence, and Impact.** The advanced track for returning scholars, focused on community leadership, mentorship of younger peers, and the National Capstone project.

Both cohorts attend the same eight Saturday sessions each year (September–April), so curriculum and expectations stay consistent across the full scholar body while each cohort carries its own identity and alumni pride. Legacy Cohort scholars additionally continue into the National Leadership Capstone track (Boot Camp, National Competition, and graduation) from May through July. Over time, this creates a visible pipeline: Genesis Cohort → Legacy Cohort → Collegiate 100 → chapter membership and future mentorship.

7. Organizational Structure

Role	Responsibility
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Director of Mentoring	Owens the Academy end to end: curriculum fidelity, mentor recruitment, budget, and Board reporting.
Academy Coordinators	Run monthly sessions, manage attendance and logistics, and serve as the point of contact for mentors and families.
Mentors	Assigned one-on-one to scholars; deliver monthly contact, coaching, and accountability per the Mentor Playbook.
Subject-Matter Experts (SMEs)	Guest-facilitate specialized academies (e.g., Financial Literacy, Career Exploration).
Parent/Family Liaison	Coordinates family communication, volunteer opportunities, and the Parent Partnership commitments.
Executive Board	Approves budget and policy, reviews annual success metrics, and champions community and funding partnerships.

8. Mentor Expectations

Every mentor commits to a defined, documented standard rather than an open-ended volunteer role. At minimum, mentors are expected to maintain monthly one-on-one contact with their assigned scholar, attend academy sessions when possible, complete brief post-contact reporting, uphold clear professional boundaries, and partner with families on each scholar's individual goals. The full expectations, monthly conversation guides, and accountability structure are detailed in Volume III (Scholar & Mentor Handbook) and the companion Mentor Playbook.

9. Parent Partnership

Scholar outcomes improve when families are treated as partners rather than bystanders. Parents and guardians are asked to commit to consistent attendance and drop-off/pickup reliability, open communication with mentors and coordinators, participation in at least one family-facing event per semester, and reinforcement of academy assignments at home. In return, the Academy commits to transparent communication, advance scheduling, and regular progress updates.

10. Scholar Journey

- Entry — Application, family orientation, and mentor matching into the Genesis Cohort.
- Foundation Year — Monthly academies, one-on-one mentoring, and the beginning of the Leadership Portfolio.
- Advancement — Promotion into the Legacy Cohort upon meeting attendance, service, and portfolio benchmarks.
- Capstone — Team-based community problem-solving project, culminating in the National Leadership Capstone competition (Volume IV).
- Graduation — Completion of attendance, service, leadership hours, and portfolio requirements; formal recognition at the Academy's annual ceremony.
- Alumni Pipeline — Pathway into Collegiate 100, chapter membership, and future mentorship roles.

11. Annual Calendar

The Leadership Academy runs eight Saturday sessions from September through April, shared by both the Genesis and Legacy Cohorts, followed by the Legacy Cohort's National Leadership Capstone track through July. Sessions run 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at Upstate Circle of Friends unless otherwise announced.

Date	Focus
September 19, 2026	Kickoff, Parent & Scholar Orientation, Mentor Meet & Greet
October 17, 2026	Financial Literacy & Economic Empowerment
November 21, 2026	Entrepreneurship / AI & Career Exposure
December 12, 2026	Health & Wellness + Midyear Reflection
January 16, 2027	Goal Setting, Leadership & Accountability
February 20, 2027	Emotional Intelligence & Healthy Relationships
March 20, 2027	Career, College & Life Readiness
April 17, 2027	Community Leadership, Celebration & Program Closeout
May	Capstone Boot Camp (Legacy Cohort, six-week preparation cycle — Volume IV)
June	National Leadership Capstone showcase and judging
July	Annual recognition ceremony; portfolio review; Board reporting on success metrics

12. Budget

A detailed line-item budget will be developed jointly with the Treasurer during the chartering process; the categories below reflect the Academy's core cost centers for Board planning purposes.

Category	Purpose
Curriculum & Materials	Facilitator guides, scholar workbooks, portfolio binders, and academy supplies.
Mentor Training & Recognition	Onboarding, certification, and annual mentor appreciation.
Family Engagement	Parent Partnership events and family communication tools.
Capstone & National Prep	Boot camp materials, travel support, and presentation resources.
Recognition & Graduation	Ceremony costs, awards, and scholar recognition items.
Community Partnerships	SME honoraria and partner-hosted site visits.

13. Success Metrics

- Enrollment and retention rate across Genesis and Legacy Cohorts, by intake.
- Attendance rate at monthly academies and mentor contact-completion rate.
- Graduation rate against defined attendance, service, and portfolio benchmarks.
- Advancement rate from Genesis to Legacy Cohort and from Legacy Cohort to Collegiate 100.
- Capstone participation and performance at the National Leadership Capstone competition.
- Family engagement participation rate and end-of-year satisfaction feedback from scholars, mentors, and parents.

14. Community Partnerships

The Academy's curriculum depends on subject-matter experts and site partners — financial institutions for the Financial Literacy academy, local employers for career exploration, and community organizations for service-learning components of the Capstone. The Director of Mentoring will maintain a standing partner roster so that each academy can draw on a consistent bench of qualified volunteers rather than ad hoc recruitment each cycle. Partnerships also create a natural on-ramp for sponsorship and funder engagement tied to specific, visible parts of the program.

15. National Competition Pipeline

The Legacy Cohort's capstone experience is designed as this chapter's pipeline into 100 Black Men of America's national leadership competition circuit. Scholar teams identify a real community problem, research it, design an innovative solution, build a financial plan, and deliver a professional presentation — modeled as a collegiate honors project rather than a school assignment. The full requirements, judging rubric, and six-week Boot Camp are detailed in Volume IV (National Leadership Capstone Guide).

16. Five-Year Growth Strategy

Year	Milestone
Year 1	Charter the Academy; launch first Genesis Cohort; finalize the four-volume operating manual.
Year 2	First Genesis-to-Legacy promotion; first chapter-level Capstone showcase.
Year 3	First cohort reaches the National Leadership Capstone competition; formalize SME partner roster.
Year 4	Establish Collegiate 100 pipeline tracking for graduating scholars; expand mentor corps.
Year 5	Full two-cohort model at target capacity; alumni mentors return as Academy facilitators.

This Executive Leadership Proposal is Volume I of the 100 Black Men of the Upstate Leadership Academy Operating Manual. Volumes II–IV (Curriculum & Facilitator Guide, Scholar & Mentor Handbook, and National Leadership Capstone Guide), together with the companion Mentor Playbook, provide the full operational detail behind each section above.