



2026 FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

# *Leadership* **CLASS**

**MAY 14-15, 2026**

**Florida League of Cities**

135 E. Colonial Drive

Orlando, FL 32801

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LEADING WHERE YOU STAND:  
**Courage, Civility, and Community Impact**

*This theme recognizes that local elected officials lead in the most visible, personal form of government. Every vote, conversation, and decision shapes the community.*

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The day focuses on three  
leadership pillars:

**Courage**

*Making hard decisions and standing by them*

**Civility**

*Governing with integrity and respect*

**Community Impact**

*Remembering why local leadership matters*

# SCHEDULE



## THURSDAY

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.      **Reception**

## FRIDAY

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.      **Registration/Breakfast**

9:00 a.m. - 9:40 a.m.      **Welcome/Introductions**  
Speaker: Emily Colón

9:40 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.      **Keynote Session**

Human in the Room: Leading, Aligning, and Building Trust on the Dais

Speaker: Betsy Gardner

Human in the Room™ is a system built on three pillars—Presence, Judgment, and Trust—the human qualities that build verifiable credibility. Developed by Betsy Gardner, who also authored the accompanying book, the system offers a structured approach to strengthening how you show up and lead. Within each pillar, attendees will find practical frameworks, real-life stories of what went wrong and who got it right, reflective prompts, and self-assessment tools to measure growth.

10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.      **Refreshment Break and Betsy Gardner Book Signing**

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

### **Panel**

The Reality of Public Leadership: Lessons Learned

Speakers: The Honorables Kamia Brown, Bob Cortes, and Bobby Olszewski

In this candid conversation, former elected officials share real lessons from their time in office, including the decisions that tested their courage, the moments that required discipline and civility, and the responsibility of leading communities through complex issues.

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.      **Lunch**

# SCHEDULE



## Friday, *continued*

1:00 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.

### **Workshop**

Leadership Is a Muscle: Courage, Civility, and Community Impact

Speaker: Emily Colón

Local elected officials operate in one of the most visible and demanding leadership environments. Every decision carries weight and has a lasting impact on the community. Attendees will explore how leadership must be strengthened over time through courage in decision-making, civility in how leaders show up, and a clear connection to community impact.

1:45 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

### **Refreshment Break**

2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

### **Keynote**

Trust Starts Here: What Local Leaders Can Do That Other Governments Can't

Speaker: Adam Hollingsworth

Local government remains the closest point of contact between citizens and their leaders. This session examines how local elected officials can turn that proximity into an advantage by building cultures of accountability, candor, and follow-through within their organizations and communities.

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

### **Refreshment Break**

3:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

### **Workshop**

Looking Ahead: The Next Era of Florida Cities

Speaker: Emily Colón

During this facilitated group discussion, attendees will share what leadership techniques will be required over the next decade.

3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

### **Closing Reflection**

