



**Centurions: The Way Forward**  
**May 14, 2020**

The mission of Centurions is: To prepare a representative cross-section of the community's emerging leaders for their role in shaping the future of Greater Kansas City. The Centurions program mission is achieved by: Acquainting members with current community issues; providing a framework for meeting other current and future community leaders, promoting greater awareness of community resources, exploring diversified segments of metropolitan Kansas City, and offering avenues to become more civically involved through Centurions-supported service projects or other civic opportunities presented to Centurions members. The tenets of Centurions are Learn – Serve - Lead.

**Guiding Principles:** As program changes are considered due to COVID-19, the following guiding principles should be considered:

1. **Viability** – Since 1976, Centurions has been the premier leadership program in the region and a staple program of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. The KC Chamber is committed to program sustainability and ensuring that the program operates now and into the future.
2. **Mission** - The mission of Centurions is to prepare leaders for the future. These challenging circumstances that we face require ingenuity, problem solving, and the ability to lead change. Many organizations made the investment in Centurions to return a more engaged, educated, thoughtful, and connected leader.
3. **Experience** - These leaders are also having to adapt to the “new normal” which means programming may not look like it once did. Centurions pride themselves in this “self-led” program and should remain judicious when considering the future of the program as well as their own legacy as Centurions.

**Proposal:** To accommodate for the extraordinary circumstances affecting the Centurions program caused by COVID-19, we propose:

- tuition reductions to \$1625 (organizations with fewer than 250 employees) and \$2675 (organizations with more than 250 employees) for the 2020-2021 program year to cover administrative fees and anticipated expenses for small group programming. After the 2020-2021 program year, original tuition rates of \$2625 and \$3675 will be reinstated.
- The Spring Cohort program year will begin June 15, 2020 and go through February 28, 2021. The Fall Cohort program year begins September 15, 2020 and go through June 30, 2021.
- A deadline extension of the application deadline and recruiting period for the Fall Class of 2022 to July 1, 2020.
- The single participant organizational limit will be lifted until May 31, 2021.
- Chamber membership requirements at program acceptance will be temporarily lifted until May 31, 2021.

- KC Chamber membership requirements will be relaxed for those affected by job loss/furlough for the duration of program participation (Fall 2021/2022 and Spring 2021/2022).
- KC Chamber staff recognizes that there could be unusual scenarios not contemplated by these revised guidelines and it reserves the right to work with the Centurions Steering Committee to come to a reasonable resolution

Additionally, we recognize that other programmatic changes are necessary or optimal to shape the Centurions experience over the next 12 months. KC Chamber staff will support the Steering Committee for each Centurions cohort in creating an experience that fulfills the Centurions mission and befits the history of excellence that accompanies the program. In full support of this work, we make the following recommendations:

- Community service hour requirements should be relaxed for the 2020-2021 program year in consideration of the additional outside commitments of all program participants during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Attendance requirements should be relaxed in order to demonstrate sensitivity to participants' comfort levels regarding group activities and adjustments to professional and personal time commitments.
- Task Force Days and other programming should be reconsidered to accommodate for social distancing guidelines and may occur both virtually and in smaller breakout groups, until gathering in larger numbers is safe.
- Benchmarking trips should be coordinated to observe social distancing protocols and participant comfort and Trip Chairs should determine a contingency date in case large group events or travel outside of the area are still prohibited.
- Centurions Retreat should be held virtually or in small groups, as imagined by the Retreat Committee, to ensure appropriate social distancing. The Retreat Committee will lead efforts to creatively kick-off the program year.