



Annual Impact Report



INSTITUTE for GEORGIA
ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

February 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026

FISCAL YEAR

20
26

PROGRAM YEAR 2025

Letter from the Chairman of the Board —

Dear friends of IGEL,

When I arrived in Georgia in 2017, I had spent 23 years in public service with the USDA Forest Service in Louisiana and North Carolina. In my new role as Director of the Jones Center at Ichauway, I was in a different sector and a different place. I was eager to learn and connect. IGEL was there for me, wrapping me in an immersive crash course in Georgia’s issues, ecosystems, people, and institutions. My Class of 2018 experience gave me instant understanding and surrounded me with a community that has only deepened and expanded since. My involvement with IGEL has likewise grown.

The opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors and then as Chair has been both a logical next step and an honor. I am sure that many of you are on similar journeys of career and commitment to IGEL and to the natural resources of our great state. We offer this new annual report as a chance to learn more about how IGEL impacts lives, shapes careers, nurtures networks, and impacts solutions to sticky problems.

IGEL is thriving, engaging, and creating. From our exemplary annual program to our new IGEL Advanced Program, we are ever flexible, resilient, responsive, and committed. Enjoy the updates in these pages, and let us know what you think. Also know that your support in all its forms is absolutely welcome and greatly appreciated.

IGEL matters. Your involvement and engagement and support matter... more than you know. Read on, consider your own IGEL journey. What is next for IGEL? For you?

At your service,



Dr. Kier D. Klepzig
Chair of the Board
Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership



Program Year 2025 (FY 26) Board of Directors

Kim Ajy – IGEL ‘15
Program Committee Chair
R2T, Inc.

Steven Aufdenkampe –
IGEL ‘17
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Committee Chair
King and Spalding (Retired)

Mona Behl – IGEL ‘17
University of Georgia

Juliet Cohen – IGEL ‘14
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Jeff Cown – IGEL ‘09
Georgia Environmental
Protection Division

Nick DiLuzio – IGEL ‘19
Forisk Consulting

Tom Driver – IGEL ‘18
Terracon Consultants, Inc.

Tim Goodson – IGEL ‘05
Retired

Dan Grogan – IGEL ‘11
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(2024 – 2026), (Retired)

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Kazmarek Mowrey Cloud
Laseter LLP

Candi Hampton – IGEL ‘22
Shaw Industries

Wendy Hogg – IGEL ‘24
Devine Georgia

Lewis Jones – IGEL ‘09
Governance Committee Chair
Jones Fortuna LP

Huiet Joseph – IGEL ‘19
Southwire

Dr. Kier Klepzig – IGEL ‘18
Incoming Board Chair (2026 –
2028)
The Jones Center at Ichauway

Brett Mitchell – IGEL ‘11
Georgia Power Company

Gwen Ruff – IGEL ‘15
Selections Committee Chair,
Secretary
Columbus Water Works (Retired)

Sarah Skinner – IGEL ‘22
Engagement Committee Chair
Georgia Water Planning &
Policy Center

Ben Taube – IGEL ‘04
Finance Committee Chair,
Treasurer
Bank of America

Monica Thornton – IGEL ‘17
Vice Chair
The Nature Conservancy in
Georgia

Thatcher Young – IGEL ‘23
Green Power EMC

Program Committee —

The Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL) continues to fulfill its mission of developing informed, collaborative leaders equipped to address Georgia’s complex environmental challenges. Through immersive, place-based sessions across the state, participants gain a deeper understanding of the environmental issues affecting Georgia while building lasting relationships with leaders from diverse sectors. The result is a growing network of alumni committed to thoughtful leadership and collaborative problem-solving.

New Facilitation Team

Over the past year, the Program Committee remained focused on strengthening the program through continuous evaluation and enhancement of curriculum, participant experience, and session delivery. The committee welcomed IGEL’s new facilitation team, Mandy Mahoney and Clarence Jackson, whose collaborative approach, energy, and expertise have enhanced the learning experience throughout the program year. The facilitation team, with the support of the committee, completed a comprehensive refresh of the Atlanta session, ensuring the content continues to reflect environmental priorities, emerging issues, and opportunities for meaningful participant engagement.

IGEL Advanced Program

A significant milestone in 2025 was the advancement of the IGEL Advanced Program from a long-held vision to a reality. Thanks to the generous support of a transformational donor, IGEL launched the development of this new leadership experience, created exclusively for IGEL alumni. Beginning in 2026, the Advanced Program will provide experienced environmental leaders with a deeper, more immersive exploration of the complex environmental, economic, and social issues shaping Georgia’s future.

Building on the strength of the IGEL network, the program will create opportunities for alumni to strengthen their leadership, challenge perspectives, and engage in meaningful dialogue while tackling real-world issues alongside peers from across the state. The Program Committee remains committed ensuring that IGEL continues to evolve while preserving the qualities that have made it one of Georgia’s premier environmental leadership programs. Through ongoing collaboration and a shared commitment to excellence, the committee looks forward to supporting another successful year of leadership development.



Dr. Kier D.
Klepzig



Kim
Ajay



Lindsay Cain



Dr. Kier D. Klepzig

Class of 2025 Updates

In January 2026, IGEL successfully graduated its 23rd cohort, the Class of 2025.

This diverse group of 30 leaders represented the geographic, economic, and professional diversity of Georgia, bringing together voices from industry, advocacy, government, nonprofits, and academia.



Over nine months and four sessions, participants engaged in:

Experiential learning: Site visits, case studies, and field exploration in Georgia's coast, mountains, urban centers, and agricultural communities. Collaborative leadership practice: Peer coaching, facilitated dialogue, and cross-sector workshops. Skill-building: Training in negotiation, systems thinking, climate resilience, and stakeholder engagement. The Class of 2025 joined IGEL's network of nearly 700 Alumni, many of whom serve in senior leadership roles in energy, utilities, state agencies, nonprofits, and business.



IGEL Class of 2025

David Bell, Atlanta
Jacobs

Cole E. Blackwell, Marietta
Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority

Becca Bolden Mason, Dalton
Mohawk

Jay C. Boren, Newnan
Coweta County Water & Sewerage Authority

Brian Cooper, Peachtree City
Red Tail Land Co.

Cynthia Curry, Decatur
Metro Atlanta Chamber

David Lloyd Davis, Atlanta
Cascade Springs Nature Conservancy

Alex Dileo, Atlanta
Atlanta Botanical Garden

Eric Holder, Cumming
Cox Enterprises, Inc

Amy Hou, Atlanta
Southwire

Alia Johnson, Decatur
DeKalb County, Department of Watershed Management

Sandra Kruger, Atlanta
Olmstead Linear Park Alliance

Julie Lester, Tifton
Valdosta State University

Sam Lilly, Atlanta
Delta Air Lines

Chris Manganiello, Mableton
Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

Jennifer McNelly, Atlanta
Georgia Power Company

Lisa Myler, Albany
Georgia Dept of Natural Resources (EPD)

Justin Nickelson, Lithia Springs
The Conservation Fund

Clint Peacock, Watkinsville
Georgia Dept of Natural Resources (Fisheries)

Jon Philipsborn, Atlanta
Atlanta Regional Commission

Josh Puhlick, Newton
The Jones Center at Ichauway

Joshua Raglin, Atlanta
Norfolk Southern

Natasha B. Rice, Roswell
Chattahoochee Nature Center

Lane Rivenbark, Athens
Nutter & Associates, Inc.

Laura Schneider, Columbus
River Valley Regional Commission

Laura Solomon, Savannah
ECO GEORGIA CORP

Joe Thomas, Savannah
Sapelo Foundation

Bert Way, Atlanta
Kennesaw State University

Karlie Webb, Marietta
Troutman Pepper

Tom Wurzinger, Kennesaw
Geosyntec Consultants, Inc.





Sarah Skinner

Engagement Committee

The Engagement Committee combines communications and events to strengthen and expand the IGEL network by creating meaningful opportunities for alumni, friends, and partners to stay connected. By extending the IGEL experience beyond the program and introducing IGEL to prospective new program participants, the committee provides high-quality events, professional development offerings, and continuing education that support lifelong learning and leadership growth.

The engagement program is anchored by two annual events, and incorporates additional networking and educational opportunities throughout the year. These events are intentionally held throughout different regions of the state to ensure that IGEL’s reach and impact continue to grow, while honoring our commitment to statewide representation and accessibility.



Events

In January, the annual IGEL Summit at the Norfolk Southern headquarters in Atlanta brought together approximately 130 IGELians from multiple class years. As our signature gathering, the Summit serves not only as a celebration of the program’s enduring legacy but also as a platform for forward-looking discussions. It offers alumni the opportunity to reconnect with the mission of IGEL, engage with peers across Georgia’s environmental sectors, and gain fresh insight from featured speakers and collaborative sessions.

In June, nearly 30 attendees reconnected in Columbus for “Flowing Forward: the Chattahoochee River’s Role in the Columbus Region’s Sustainable Future,” facilitated by John Peebles (IGEL ’23). Attendees enjoyed networking time and a powerful presentation from conservation, business, utility and recreation leaders about how collaborative partnerships are sustaining the river and supporting a vibrant, resilient Columbus region.

The annual IGEL Reception at the Georgia Environmental Conference (GEC), held in Jekyll Island each August, welcomed approximately 130 IGELians and guests. This defining event has become an essential moment for IGEL to highlight and thank program sponsors whose support sustains the organization’s mission. It also serves as a vital outreach and recruitment opportunity, allowing IGEL to engage with professionals from the diverse environmental industries represented at GEC and to introduce prospective participants to the value of our leadership network.

IGELians convened once again in Athens in October, where nearly 30 attendees met at Terrapin Beer Company to enjoy a tour with the Athens–Clarke County Solid Waste Department and educational program, “From Scrap to Soil: Composting in Georgia.” The event featured a panel of experts discussing innovation, challenges, and opportunities in composting—facilitated by Suki Janssen (IGEL ’20/21).

Annual Report

This Annual Report reflects another year of growth, collaboration, and impact for IGEL. It highlights the progress made throughout the year while celebrating the dedicated work of our Board of Directors, program leadership, donors, and partners whose vision and commitment continue to strengthen IGEL and expand its impact across Georgia.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to developing informed, connected leaders who are equipped to address Georgia’s most pressing environmental challenges through collaboration, dialogue, and shared leadership.



Ben Taube

Fiscal Year 2026 / Program Year 2025

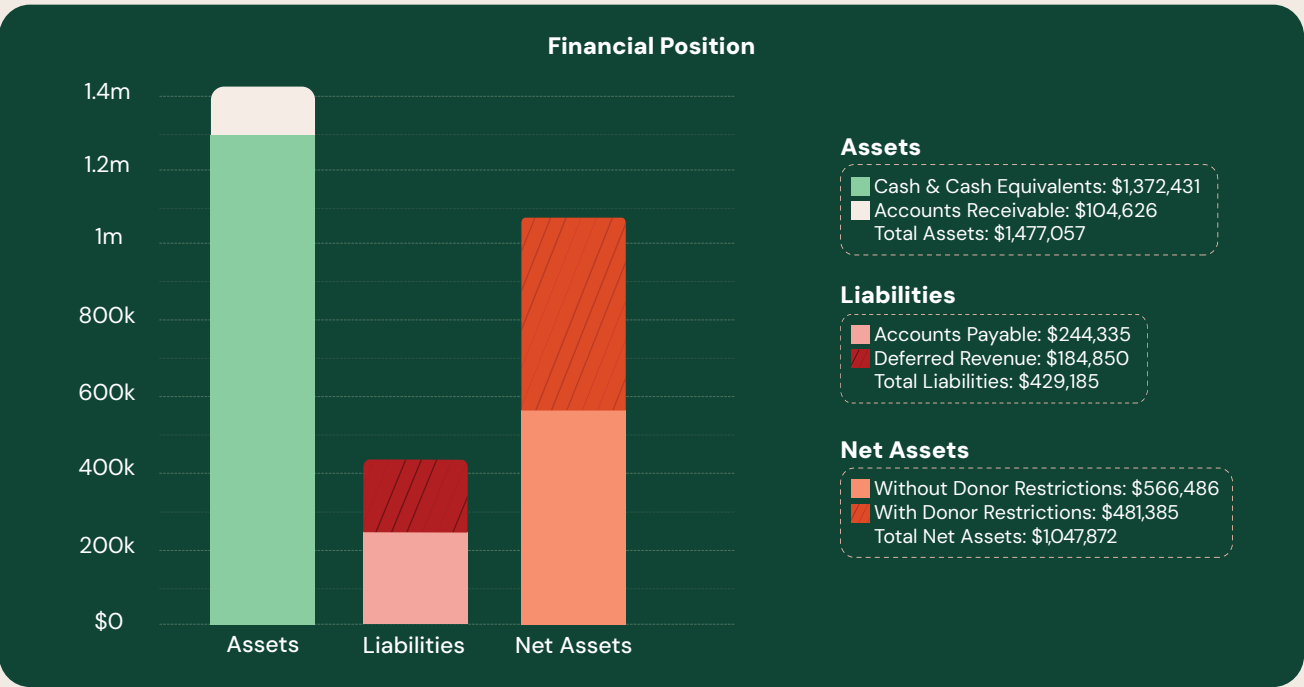
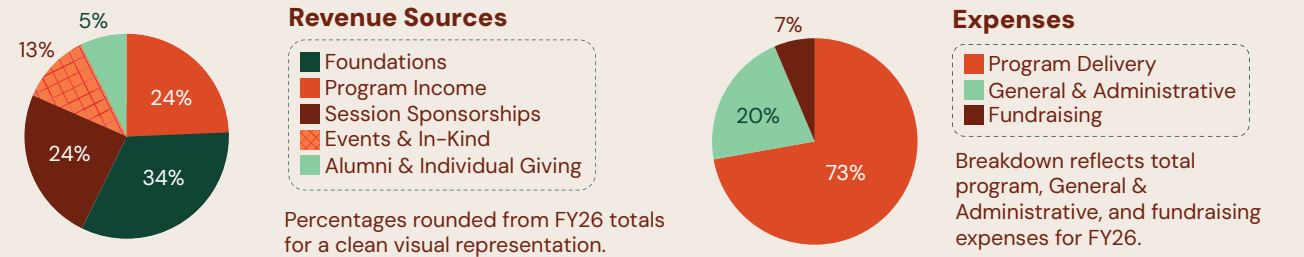
Financial Snapshot

February 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026



Impact Statement

Because of our generous supporters, IGEL remains financially resilient and able to maintain an exceptional program while expanding scholarships and Alumni engagement.



Financial Transparency

Finances are independently reviewed; full financial reports are available upon request.



Our Appreciation for IGEL Donors & Sponsors

IGEL is profoundly grateful for the generous businesses, corporations, foundations, Alumni, and individuals who make our work possible. In FY 2026, supporters contributed more than \$300,000, including essential scholarship funds that ensured strong candidates from across Georgia could participate regardless of financial capacity. Program expenses for the Class of 2025 exceed \$18,000 per participant, and tuition covers only approximately 40% of that cost.

Scholarships—funded entirely through donor support—are critical to meeting IGEL’s core commitment to diversity.

Diversity is not a feature of IGEL; it is foundational. Our value depends on bringing together leaders with different backgrounds, perspectives, geographies, experience levels, and sectors. Without scholarships, IGEL cannot fulfill its mission.

Sponsorships are designated according to donor intent:

- Scholarships directly support full or partial tuition for qualified applicants who need assistance.
- Program or Grant Sponsorships strengthen statewide sessions, curriculum development, and Alumni engagement.

For more than 20 years, IGEL has provided immersive, multi-day leadership experiences across Georgia— fostering trust and collaboration among industry, advocacy, regulatory, and community leaders. IGEL remains one of the most efficient nonprofits anywhere: Every contribution directly fuels leadership that benefits all of Georgia.

Thank you for sustaining this network of nearly 700 leaders and shaping IGEL’s future.



Patricia Barmeyer

Invest in Georgia’s Environmental Leaders

Your support powers the next generation of IGEL — leaders who collaborate across industries, communities, and political lines to protect Georgia’s natural resources and build a more resilient future.

When you give to IGEL, you’re not just funding a program. You’re strengthening a statewide network of changemakers. You’re creating opportunities for leaders who might not otherwise have access to this experience. Make your gift today.



Scan the QR code to give.

Donors

Giving Levels

Restoring (\$10,000+)

Anonymous
Cox Enterprises
Delta
Fogg Charitable Trust
Georgia Environmental Finance Authority
Georgia Forestry Foundation
Georgia Power Foundation
Green Rock
Norfolk Southern
Ray C. Anderson Foundation
Southern Company Gas
Southwire
Watershed Geo
Woodard & Curran

Sustaining (\$5,000–\$9,999)

The Coca-Cola Company
Georgia-Pacific LLC
HL Strategy*
King & Spalding
Voyagers Consulting*

Conserving (\$3,000–\$4,999)

Columbus Water Works
Georgia Ports Authority
Hodges, Harbin, Newberry & Tribble, Inc.
The Jones Center at Ichauway
Jones Fortuna LP
Resource + Land Consultants
Shaw Industries Group, LLC
WSP

Renewing (\$1,500–\$2,999)

Buckeye Elm Contracting
Gilbert & Ezelle
Nutter & Associates
Oyamacor
R2T, Inc
Savannah Economic Development Authority

Friends of IGEL (\$1–\$1,499)

Covey Rise*
Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District*
Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center at Albany State University*
Golden Peanut
JET Farms
Longleaf Ridge
Mitchell EMC
The Old Post Office*
Planters & Citizens Bank
White Oak Pastures*

Event Sponsors

Spring Event

Anonymous (2)
Barge Designs
Georgia Power
Hotel Indigo*

GEC Reception

Anonymous
Billy Hall
Cherry Street Energy
ES Integrated
Eurofins Environment Testing
Environmental Standards, Inc.
GEI Consultants
Jacobs
Jekyll Island Authority
Jones Fortuna LP
Kleinfelder
Kazmarek Mowrey Cloud
Laseter LLP
Longleaf Consulting
The Nature Conservancy in Georgia
Nutter & Associates
Resource + Land Consultants
Stantec
Terracon Consultants, Inc.
TRC
Verdantas
Woodard & Curran

Fall Event

Georgia Power
Green Rock

Summit

Atlanta Gas & Light
The Coca-Cola Foundation
Eurofins
Geosyntec
The Lodge on Little St. Simons*
Mary Anne Lanier*
Norfolk Southern*

Alumni Campaign

Amy Addison
Michael Alexander
Neville Anderson
Jill Andrews
Heather Aquino
Katherine Atteberry
Steven Aufdenkampe
Patricia Barmeyer
Gregg Bayard
Kim Bednarek
Nikki Belmonte
Johnny Bembry
Damien Berahzer
Mark Berry
Cyrus Bhedwar
Michael Black
Beth Blalock
Mollie Bogle
Christine Boucher
Kelsi Bowens
Scott Boylston
David Brabham
Allison Bridges
Rodney Brooks
Pamela Burnett
Ryan Burt
Randy Butterfield
Ben Carswell
Shelley Cartwright

Laura Case
Victoria Cheplak
Juliet Cohen
Anthony Coker
Courtney Cooper
Clint Courson
Gail Cowie
Jeffrey Cown
Kelly Cutts
Dion Davis
Jesse Demonbreun-Chapman
Michael Diaz
Brooke Dickerson
Nick DiLuzio
Linda DiSantis
Thomas Driver
Puneet Dwivedi
Kurt Ebersbach
Chris Faulkner
Ric Felker
Charlee Glenn
Marc Goncher
Timothy H. Goodson
Daniel Grogan
Altarral Hagen
Altarral Hagen
Kimberley Hale
Candi Hampton
Melody Harclerode
John Hardman
Dana Hartline
Doug Haymans
Karen Hays
Scott Hendricks
Hollister (Holly) Hill
Rick Horder
Jenny Hoffner
Clarence Jackson
Crystal Jackson
Suki Janssen
Danny Johnson
Lewis Jones
Shana Jones
Bob Kerr
Byron Kirkpatrick
Kier Klepzig
Sandra Kruger
Nancy-Clair Laird
Debra Lane
John Lanier
Mary Anne Lanier
Kenneth Lapierre
Scott Laseter
Shannon Lee
Lissa Leege
Pam Lister-Schalk
Odetta MacLeish-White
Mandy Mahoney
Natasha Malmin
James Marlow
Glenn Martin
Jumana Master
Joanne Mello
Leslie Miller
Aaron Mitchell
Robert (Brett) Mitchell
Andrew Montgomery
Joe Montgomery
Leah Moore
Bob Mowry

John Mulcahy
Bryan Naranjo
Michael O'Reilly
Michael Oxman
Glenn Page
Hannah Palmer
Russell Parr
Abbey Patterson
Rena Anne Peck
John Peebles
Taylor Pool
Hattie Portis-Jones
Joshua Pulick
Joshua Raglin
Marci Reed
Jim Renner
Susan Richardson
Wes Robinson
Daniel Rochberg
Gwen Ruff
Susan Rutherford
Chris Saranko
Polly Sattler
Andrea Schroer
Stephen Simpson
Paul Sims
Brian Skeens
Sarah Skinner
Jamie Smithson
Jennifer Snyder
Laura Solomon
Derek Stanfield
Charles Stripling
William Stubbs
Rachael Sulkers
Alicia Thompson
Monica Thornton
Chet Tisdale
Shane Totten
Tim Trefzer
Jessica Turner
Stephanie Valdez Streaty
Kristan VandenHeuvel
Andres Villegas
Sarah Visser
Michael Wall
Kris Waters
Karlie Webb
Andrew White
Laura Williams
Rob Williams
Ayanna Williams
Richard Wingate
Thatcher Young
Max Zygmont

* In-Kind Donations



Gwen Ruff

Selections Committee

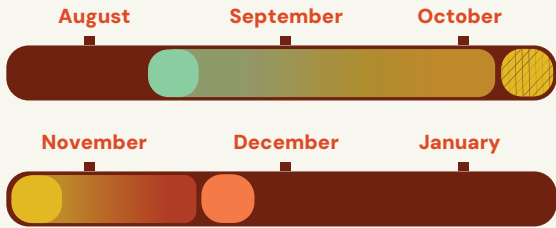
The Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership Selections Committee plays a key role in identifying leaders from diverse regions, vocations, and perspectives who are advancing environmental leadership and stewardship across Georgia.

The committee’s work supports the Board and other standing committees in ensuring the program attracts and retains dedicated individuals who can effectively contribute to the program experience and IGEL’s goals and objectives.

Selecting the Class of 2026

Application Timeline

- Aug 1: Applications go live
- Oct 3: Applications close
- Nov 6: Selections review process begins
- Nov 20: Class of 2026 notified

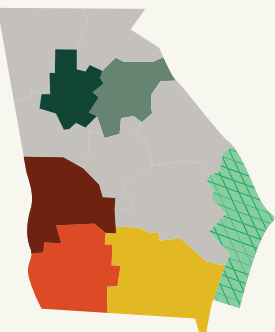


Applications Completed

17

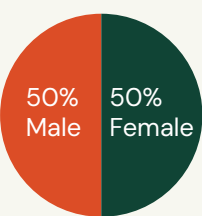
Georgia Counties
Spanning all major regions of the state

- Metro Atlanta
- Northeast Georgia
- West Georgia
- Southwest Georgia
- South Georgia
- Coastal Georgia

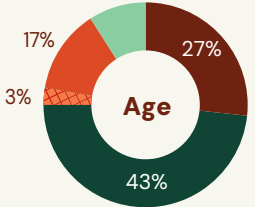


Class of 2026 Demographics

Gender

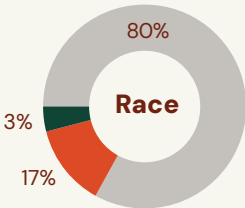


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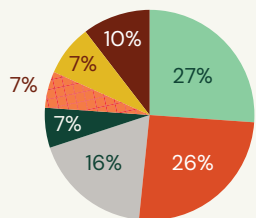
- Age 40–49
- Age 30–39
- Age 50–59
- Age 25–29
- Age 60+

Race



- White
- Black or African American
- Asian

Profession



- Government/Federal/State/Regional/Local
- Other
- Nonprofit/501(c)(3)
- Architecture/Landscape/Engineering
- Education/University
- General Business/Public Entity
- Industry/Manufacturing

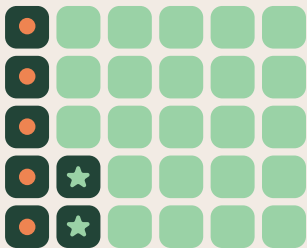
The recruitment process is a year-round process culminating in early fall with emails to current IGELians for referrals and the use of social media platforms to solicit applicants. Through an established competitive process, the Selections Committee selects 30 program participants from nearly 70 applications. Committee members review and score applications, consider candidates’ leadership roles and commitment to Georgia’s environmental challenges, and work together to recommend a diverse class.

Throughout the process, members uphold IGEL’s values of integrity, fairness, and confidentiality while helping shape a cohort that will contribute meaningfully to the state’s environmental leadership network.

Candidates are notified of selection/ non-selection status by the end of November, and class membership is formally announced and introduced at the annual IGEL Summit held in January. At the conclusion of the selections process, the committee conducts an after-action analysis to implement continuous improvements, focusing on recruitment and selection from diverse sectors, genders, experience levels, ethnicities, and geographic areas. This analysis aims to increase transparency in the process and enhance outreach opportunities.

In 2026, the Selections Committee had the opportunity to support the IGEL Board with selecting the first class for the IGEL Advanced Program. The Committee developed similar processes to build the 2026 Advanced Program and will maintain the integrity of the selections process for both programs into the future.

Scholarships



Scholarships Awarded

- Scholarship Recipient (23%)
- Standard Participant (77%)

Type of Scholarship

- 2 Full scholarships
- 5 Partial scholarships

Full Scholarship Awards

- Cox Conserves Community Environmental Leader Scholarship
- Edward C. and Lisbeth A. Fogg Charitable Trust





FY 2026

IGEL at a glance.

Founded 2001 • Nearly 700 Alumni Statewide participants from 73 Georgia counties • 30 Class of 2025 Graduates • 4 Regional Sessions across Georgia

VISION

A network of diverse statewide leaders consistently collaborating to solve Georgia's environmental challenges. IGELeaders.org IGEL facilitates leadership in collaborative problem solving to preserve and enhance the environment in the state of Georgia.

 [IGELEADERS.ORG](https://www.igeleaders.org)

Make a
gift today!
[igeleaders.org](https://www.igeleaders.org)



SUPPORT OUR WORK TODAY!

- Make a gift at [igeleaders.org](https://www.igeleaders.org)
- Become a monthly supporter
- Nominate a prospective member
- Attend a regional Engagement event