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Latino Policy Forum’s 2020 Multicultural Leadership Academy Announced

CHICAGO – The Latino Policy Forum is proud to launch its fourth cohort of its Multicultural Leadership Academy (MLA), intended to bring the state’s largest minority communities together. This year, the Forum also celebrates 10 years of leadership development, which began with the Illinois Nonprofit Latino Leadership Academy and then evolved into the MLA.

The 25 civic leaders of the 2020 cohort have a diverse range of professional backgrounds, including community organizing, policy, art, and culture. In coming together through the MLA, their mission is to bridge Latinos and African Americans, encouraging intercultural collaboration and social action. The Academy draws on a range of experiences to increase cross-cultural understanding and develop a network of leaders who will be able to call upon each other in the future.

“The Forum is very excited to be welcoming another dynamic group of leaders for the 2020 MLA cohort,” said MLA Coordinator NiCole Ward. “Not only will they be creating their own unique experiences this year, but they’ll also be able to add to the legacy of the foundation established over the past 10 years of black and brown collaborations.”

Last year, the Academy graduated 24 leaders who continue to support each other in their dynamic work devising solutions to the biggest issues facing communities of color throughout Illinois. The graduates worked in different affinity groups focused on individual issues: housing, education, census, and criminal and food justice.

“I’m thankful for the opportunity to have learned from such a wonderful group of leaders,” said 2019 MLA graduate Nancy Garcia, who worked in the census affinity group. “I learned about myself and the qualities that I can use to continue to be a better leader.”

“There is power when black and brown individuals gather together with a purpose,” said Kathleen Bolamba, another 2019 graduate, who was in the food justice group. “My MLA experience was transformational, and I so enjoyed being a part of it.”

The 2020 Multicultural Leadership Academy cohort:

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| <i>Barbara Goodall</i> | Malcolm X College | <i>Jonathan Fair</i> | University of Illinois at Chicago |
| <i>Meschino</i> | | | |
| <i>Carina Ruiz</i> | Audubon Great Lakes | <i>Lisette Arzuaga</i> | Latin United Community Housing Association |
| <i>Cason Brunt</i> | Chicago Scholars Foundation | <i>Lyzeth Mondragon</i> | American Heart Association |
| <i>Cecilia Mendoza</i> | Family Focus | <i>Maria Pike</i> | Chicago Survivors |
| <i>Cesar Nunez</i> | Enlace Chicago | <i>Militza Pagán</i> | Shriver Center on Poverty Law |

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| <i>Diana Rubi</i> | Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights | <i>Paul Callejas</i> | Chicago Center for Arts and Technology |
| <i>Ernesto Saldivar Jr.</i> | Acero Schools | <i>Ray Arroyo</i> | Enlace Chicago |
| <i>Farah Dioro Tunks</i> | Chicago Park District | <i>Roberto Mendez</i> | La Casa Norte |
| <i>Floyd Stafford</i> | Heartland Alliance | <i>Samantha Sherrod</i> | Mars Wrigley Foundation |
| <i>Ja'Neane Minor</i> | Advance Illinois | <i>Shelby Chaney</i> | Cary Comer Youth Center |
| <i>Janella Curtis</i> | 16 th Ward Administration | <i>Te'Aira Malone</i> | Metropolitan Family Services |
| <i>Juanita Pye</i> | YMCA-YSVP | <i>Yaacov Delaney</i> | Community Renewal Society |
| <i>Jennifer Baquedano</i> | Erikson Institute | | |

The Forum would like to thank the sponsors of the Academy: American Express and MacArthur Foundation

About the Latino Policy Forum

The Latino Policy Forum is the only organization in the Chicago area that facilitates the involvement of Latinos at all levels of public decision-making. The Forum conducts analysis to inform, influence and lead. Its goals are to improve education outcomes, advocate for affordable housing, promote just immigration policies, and engage diverse sectors of the community, with an understanding that advancing Latinos advances a shared future. For more information, visit www.latinopolicyforum.org.