



Latino Policy Forum's 2023 Multicultural Leadership Academy Cohort Announced

CHICAGO | The Multicultural Leadership Academy (MLA) is proud to announce the participants of the 2023 MLA Academy.

The six-month program aims to provide a diverse group of civic leaders with the leadership skills needed to facilitate collaboration between Latinos and African Americans through intercultural collaboration and social action.

“I am excited about the new 2023 Multicultural Leadership Academy and look forward to continuing the legacy of building bridges between our Black and Brown leaders and communities,” said NiCole Ward, Multicultural Leadership Academy Manager.

“I am beyond honored and excited to be part of an amazing selected community of individuals who are invested in fostering change in Black and Brown communities across Illinois. I look forward to engaging in community with my fellow cohort members and the training team around the development of innovative and creative practices that will foster access, equity, and inclusion,” said Aaron Cortes, Northeastern Illinois University, 2023 cohort.

“On behalf of all the MLA Alumni- Welcome to the family!” said Wendy Williams, University of Chicago, 2019 cohort.

“Be prepared to challenge your current way of thinking, share ideas and thoughts that you thought no one else would understand, learn, love, and grow. Leadership Development is a lifelong journey you will enjoy as part of the MLA family. Have an open mind and, most importantly, an open heart.”

The Academy's core learning competencies for participants and their organizations include:

- Arts Expression: Using the arts as a catalyst for individual and group creativity and innovation.

- Intercultural Understanding: Fostering an understanding of Illinois' Latino and African-American communities and identifying their common interests.
- Social Change, Policy Action & Community Improvement: Collaborating via 'affinity groups' on how to create a better, more equitable Illinois through social change, policy action, and community improvement.
- Transformational Leadership: Leading the way for change by uplifting, motivating, and inspiring others with a clear vision and establishing a compelling moral and ethical framework.

The 2023 Multicultural Leadership Academy Cohort:

Aaron Cortesa

Northeastern Illinois University - Center for College Access and Success

Adam Gonzalez

El Valor Corporation

Carlos Matallana

Spanish Digital

Darion Crawford

Urban Growers Collective

Edwin Ortiz

Chicago Department of Housing

Jessica Taylor

Steans Family Foundation

Jordan Esparza

College of Lake County

Jose Pizarro

ALSO

Juanita Garcia

Rebuilding Exchange

Khameron Townsend-Riley

University of Illinois at Chicago - Office of Community Collaboration

Kisha Ingram

Malcolm X College

Manuel Hernandez

Association of Latinos/as/xs Motivating Action

Marcus Samuel

Shriver Center on Poverty Law

Maria Nava

Warren-Newport Public Library

MoniqueDraper

BUILD

Noelle Gipson

University of Chicago

Pamesha Robinson

Claretian Associates

Patricia Hernandez

Roseland Community Hospital

Phasha Spencer

Ed Reports

Rocio Pulido

The Resurrection Project

Sherie Arriazola Rivera de Martinez

Safer Foundation

Tonika Davenport

Metropolitan Family Services

Vanessa Melgoza

Corazon Community Services

Vinita Voss

Will County Health Department

For more information about the Multicultural Leadership Academy, please contact NiCole Ward, Multicultural Leadership Academy Manager, nward@latinopolicyforum.org

The Forum would like to thank the sponsors of the Academy:

The Chicago Community Trust
Archer Daniels Midland
The Walder Foundation
Grand Victoria Foundation
Harris Family Foundation
Healthy Communities Foundation
The John D. and Catherine T. 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