

AFRICAN
AMERICAN
LEADERSHIP
ACADEMY



ANNUAL REPORT

African American Leadership Academy
Class 2023 Program Year



OUR MISSION

The African American Leadership Academy (AALA) **is a community-based leadership development program** that expands both the number, effectiveness and upward mobility of African American leaders in central Ohio.




LEARN


IDENTIFY


GROW

Creating rich
and authentic
development
experiences.



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Letter from Co-Executive Directors – to Stakeholders



Dear Stakeholders,

A popular African proverb, *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”*, speaks to the approach and impact of the African American Leadership Academy’s work. Our work is about going far and deep in building central Ohio’s African American leadership pipeline and recognizing we cannot do that alone. Our “together” mindset drives the kind of investment we make and community building we do to cultivate outcomes that lead us to our goal.

Building our community cultivates the culture required to be effective at navigating Fellows towards a higher level of efficacy and delivering our sponsors a high return on their investment. We are pleased to hear from our 2023 Fellows, through our Experience Survey, that we are exceeding their expectations.

The 2023 year represents our 20th and 21st classes, our second dual cohort model. We now have a total of over 340 Fellows! Our Advisory Board has been key to our success. During the 2023 program year, we witnessed the transition of our longtime Board Chair, the Honorable Yvette McGee Brown who retired from active membership on the board. We were excited to welcome Founders Larry James and Yvette McGee Brown into the first group of “AALA Board Member Emeritus” status. We thank them for their support. In addition, companies that champion the importance of bringing broader perspectives into the leadership circle continue to work beside the Academy. These companies—our sponsors—are invaluable partners to our mission. We continue to keep our eye on our north star—expanding the number and effectiveness of African American leaders in central Ohio while providing our community with a rich differentiated learning opportunity that furthers equity for all people. As we move forward together, imagine central Ohio’s leadership landscape in the coming years.

With Sincere Thanks,

Donna James & Mo Wright
Co-Executive Directors

About the African American Leadership Academy (AALA)

What makes the Academy experience **unique and unlike any other program in Columbus?**



The African American Leadership Academy is designed to expand the number of African American leaders in central Ohio who excel in their professions and engage in community service. What makes AALA's leadership development approach unique and special is its mix of participants and its guiding focus that before you can become a leader, you first have to become who you are. Furthermore, the focus is anchored in the belief that doing well professionally and personally is a platform for doing more good in the community.

Each year, **the Academy invites 40 individuals representing the corporate, small-business, entrepreneurial, government, healthcare, education, arts & culture, and non-profit sectors** of our community to participate in the Academy. These individuals have demonstrated that they have even more potential for significant accomplishments in both their professions and community service. As of 2023, 300 professionals graduated from the Academy. The 2023 Academy class increased the total number of Fellows in the community to over 340!

By design, the Academy's strengths-based curriculum focuses on rigorous reflection and thoughtful development around efficacy, leadership agility, and leadership interaction. As defined within the Academy's curriculum, "efficacy" is one's own ability to produce a desired effect. Efficacy is a set of behaviors that gives the highest return on the investment of one's time and effort. This curriculum is specifically designed to increase confidence and competence in the political, social and relational skills. It enables the development of the right mindset for producing the desired result. The Academy Fellows explore issues of negotiating race and gender in our society and identify what's getting in the way of being their most effective self.



The Academy

EXPERIENCE





The goal of the Academy Experience

is for each Fellow to develop a clearer sense of personal and professional strengths, more confidence to effectively pursue their passions, and an increased commitment to shaping our community. Our curriculum and mission is rooted in working on each individual as a distinctive leader.

The Academy's intensive core curriculum involves:

- Exploring, discovering, and developing each participant's distinctive style of leading
- Identifying and developing the skill of negotiating race in work, civic, and social settings
- Developing a personal agenda for growth and development through access to leadership coaches and strategic connections.

NEW ACADEMY COMPONENTS



Opening Retreat: All 40 Fellows started their Academy journey with an overnight retreat. During the retreat, Fellows engage in a StrengthsFinder and DiSC workshop, team building with their counterparts, and alumni engagement activities.



Korn Ferry Leadership U for Humanity:

For the second year, AALA offered a new component through the Korn Ferry Leadership U for Humanity partnership. With this new platform, Fellows receive one-on-one executive coaching, leadership and personal assessments, and professional development resources.

GRADUATES



Bria Blunt

*Administrative Secretary
to Chief Elaine Bryant
Columbus Division of Police*



Arielle Johnson

*Senior Associate Director of Gifts
and Records Administration
Denison University*



Marketta Franklin-Thomas

*Director of Learning
and Employee Development
American Electric Power*



Kyra Jones

*Food & Nutrition Manager
City of Columbus, Recreation
& Parks Dept*



Matthew Glover

*Community Development
Specialist - VP
PNC Bank*



Rick Lawrence

*Regional Vice President,
Small Commercial
Nationwide*



Sherome Hathaway

*Chief Operating Officer
ICE Mentors, Inc.*



Chauna Mason

*Sr. Specialist, Quality Compliance
Cardinal Health*



Karen Hewitt

*Associate Director
Leadership Columbus*



Makiva McIntosh

*Associate Director of Development
Director of Annual Giving
The Wellington School*



Jennifer McKenzie
*Associate Vice President,
 Program Performance & Strategy*
 Columbus Urban League



Tina Pierce
Chief of Strategy and Belonging
 The Ohio State University



Beatrice Nokuri
Assistant General Counsel
 Genesis HealthCare System



Kellen Showes
Development Analyst
 Columbus Metropolitan
 Housing Authority



Matthew Orr
Vice President
 Crane Investment Company



Dwayne Steward
*Chief People, Culture
 & Programs Officer*
 Equitas Health



Heather Patterson
Sr. Manager Strategist / Co-Owner
 Nationwide / SoulFreshColumbus



Shelbi Toone
*Project Manager Poindexter
 Village Museum & Cultural
 Learning Center*
 Ohio History Connection



Ezekiel Peebles
Clinical Director
 Key Counseling and Consultation LLC



Nichelle White
Director- HR Business Partner
 OhioHealth

Meet Our Class of 2023

GRADUATES



Tracey Colson

*Director of School Improvement
and Family Engagement*
Whitehall City Schools



Moses Hayelom

Entrepreneur
Flavor 91 Bistro



Craig Conley

Regional Sales Leader
LinkedIn Corporation



Justin Hines

Sr. Consultant, Finance
Nationwide



Terry Green

Executive Director
Think Make Live Youth



Wilbert James

Police Officer
City of Columbus



Dale Gresson

*Executive Administrator &
Chairperson - Justice, Safety,
and Legal Studies Division*
Columbus State Community
College (CCSC)



Jamille Jones

*Sr Manager, Diveristy, Equity,
Inclusion (DEI)*
Bath & Body Works



Kevin Grove

Special Agent
U.S. Dept of Health and
Human Services



Marlon McKoy

Project Manager
Battelle Memorial Institute



Aiesha Pitts
Sr. Manager Omni-Fulfillment
 Designer Brands Inc



Casandra Steward
Director, Human Resources
 OhioHealth



Mia Prewitt
Supervisor of Student Leadership & Engagement
 Columbus City Schools



Elizabeth Caslin - Turner
Administrative Assistant/ Program Coordinator
 Ohio Department of Higher Education



Nataria Scales
Budget Analyst
 American Electric Power



Carolyn Thurman
Deputy Director of Planning and Development
 City of Westerville



Shameikia Smith
Vice President of Housing Programs
 IMPACT Community Action



Delila Wootten
Vice President, Project Execution
 JP Morgan Chase & Co



Stephanie Starks
Therapist/Owner
 Starks Counseling & Consultation Services, LLC



Adrienne Williams
Marketing Manager
 Bread Financial

Class 2023 Kickoff Reception (December 2022)

New class fellows are joined by Alumni, Board members, sponsor representatives, and community members to celebrate the beginning of the Academy experience. Fellows have an opportunity to connect with their cohort and network with the AALA community.



Opening Retreat (January 2023)



Board Engagement Session (March 2023)

The 40 Class Fellows came together to network and build relationships with Advisory Board members. Fellows also engage with their colleagues as board members share insight on their career trajectories and offer insight and advice for professional and personal development.



Power of Choice Class Sessions (February – August 2023)

Fellows completed four 'Power of Choice' training sessions, led by expert facilitator Audra Bohannon of Bohannon Advisory. Each class has a different curriculum that promote key objective of the Academy around leadership agility, efficacy, and leadership interactions.



Final Presentations (September 2023)

All Fellows complete a final presentation using the Five C's; Clarity, Challenges, Career, Connections, and Community. Fellows are encouraged to be creative and thoughtful as they gather their self-learning, observations, and vision to present to the group in a safe and encouraging environment.



Graduation (October 2023)

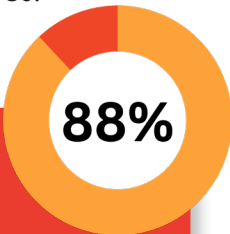
All 40 of the Class 2023 Fellows completed the Academy and successfully graduated from the program. The Keynote speaker Michael Hyter, President of the National Executive Leadership Council (ELC) shared Leadership Lessons with graduates as they embark on their professional and personal journeys, continuing to make an impact and blaze trails for the community.



The 2023 AALA Graduation
was proudly presented
by Nationwide.



At the conclusion of each program year, all AALA Fellows complete an 'Class Experience Survey.' The survey allows Fellows to share their insight and feedback on whether the Academy **1) Met its objectives, 2) Delivered the value that it intended** for the Fellows, **3) Met Fellows' expectations.** Survey results tell the story of how the experience benefited and impacted their personal and professional lives.



88%

Efficacy Mindset

Agreed and Strongly Agreed

"As a result of the Academy, my ability to acquire the knowledge, skills and tools needed to achieve a greater impact, influence, and contribution to my organization has grown."



98%

Leadership Awareness

Agreed and Strongly Agreed

"As a result of my participation in the Academy, I am more aware of how to effectively identify and use my leadership strengths."



100%

Leadership Agility

Agreed and Strongly Agreed

"As a result of AALA, I am more aware of the importance of reflecting upon situations that do not produce my desired outcome (i.e., self-efficacy) than prior to my participation in the Academy."



95%

Community Responsibility

Agreed and Strongly Agreed

"I am a more effective leader at work and/or in the broader Central Ohio community, as a result of AALA."



54%

Promotions, Economic Mobility, & Leadership Roles

"I have received a job promotion or assumed a NEW leadership role during my time in the program."



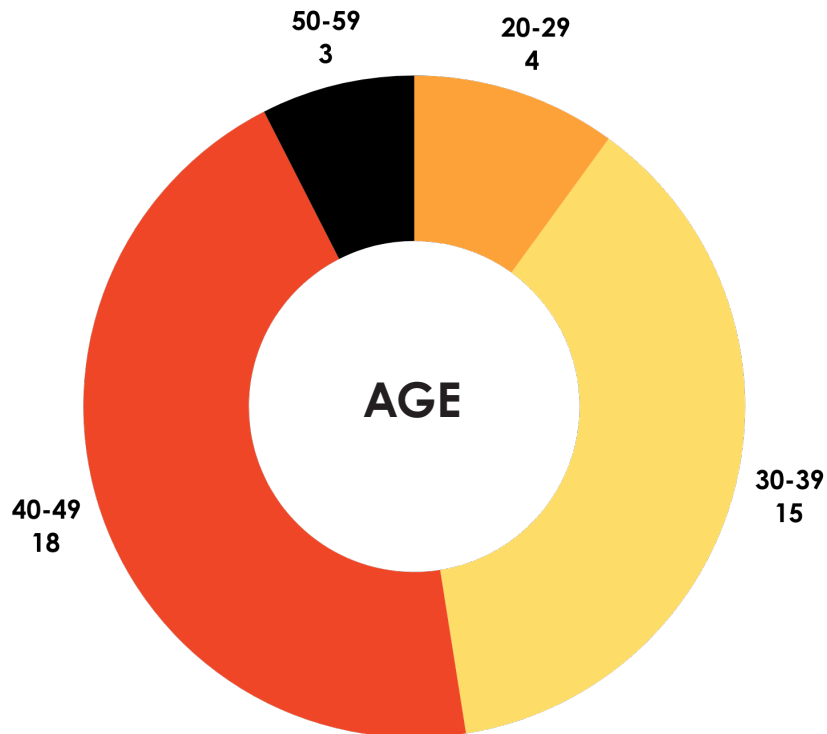
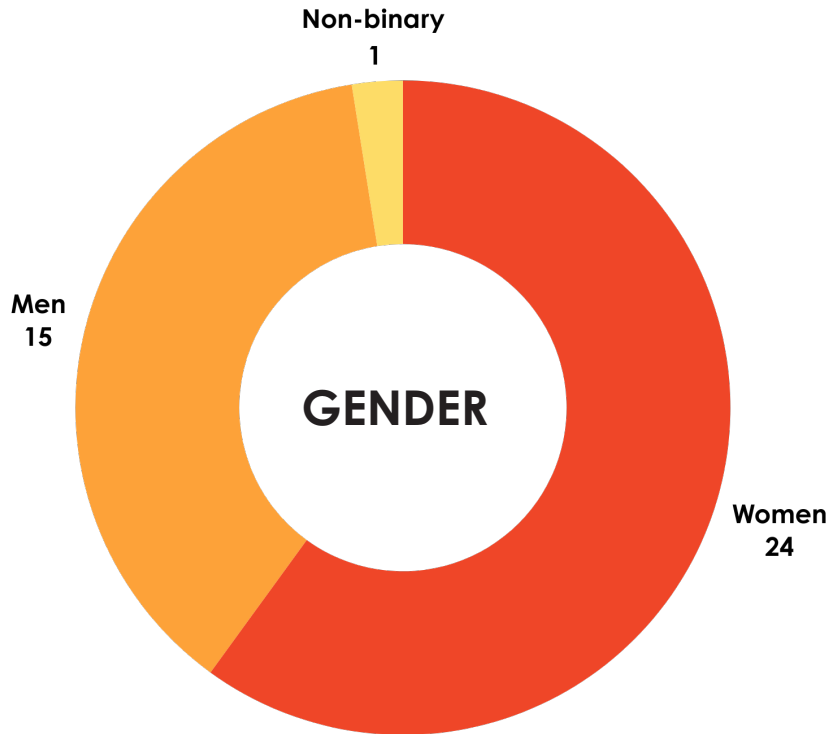
100%

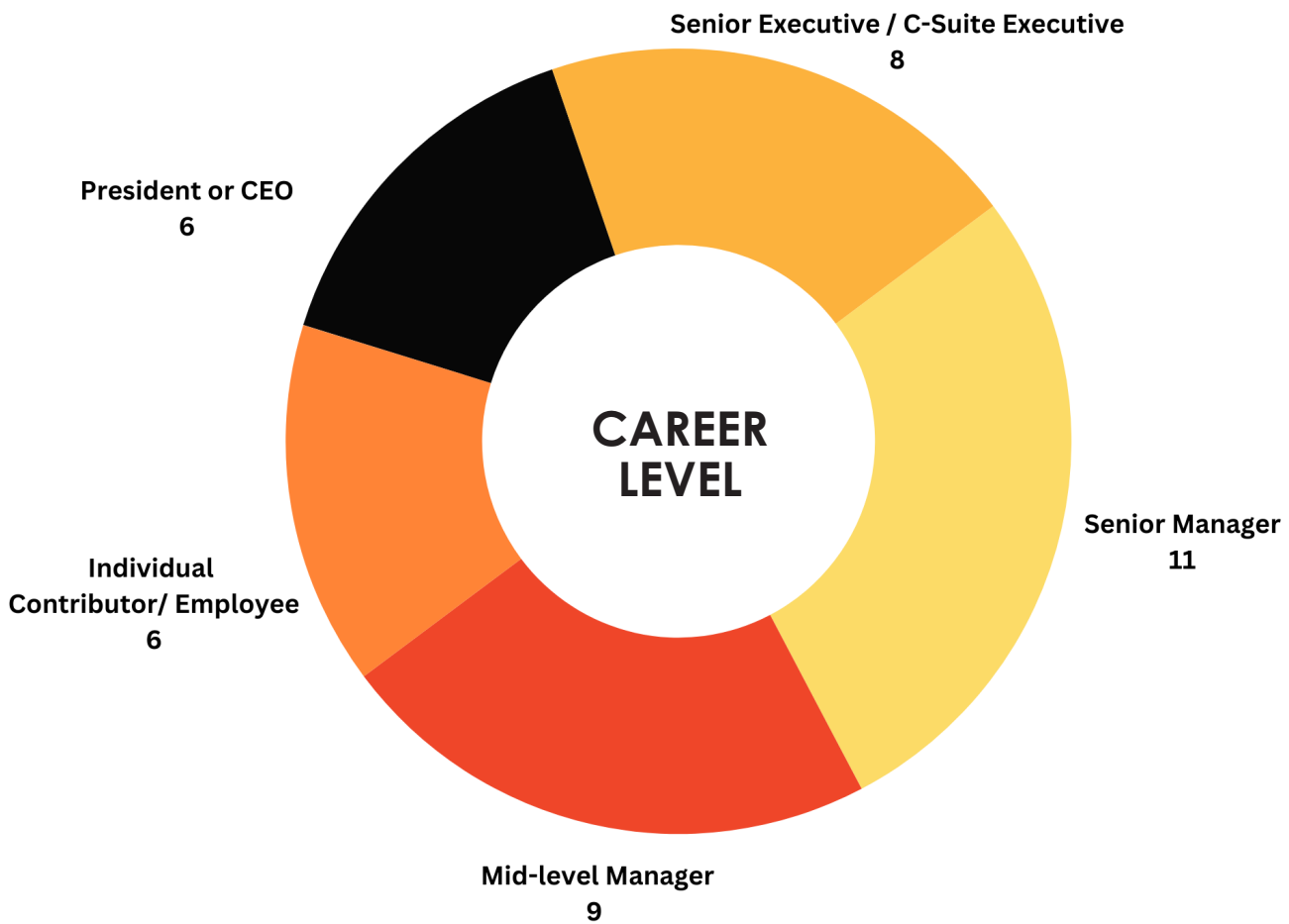
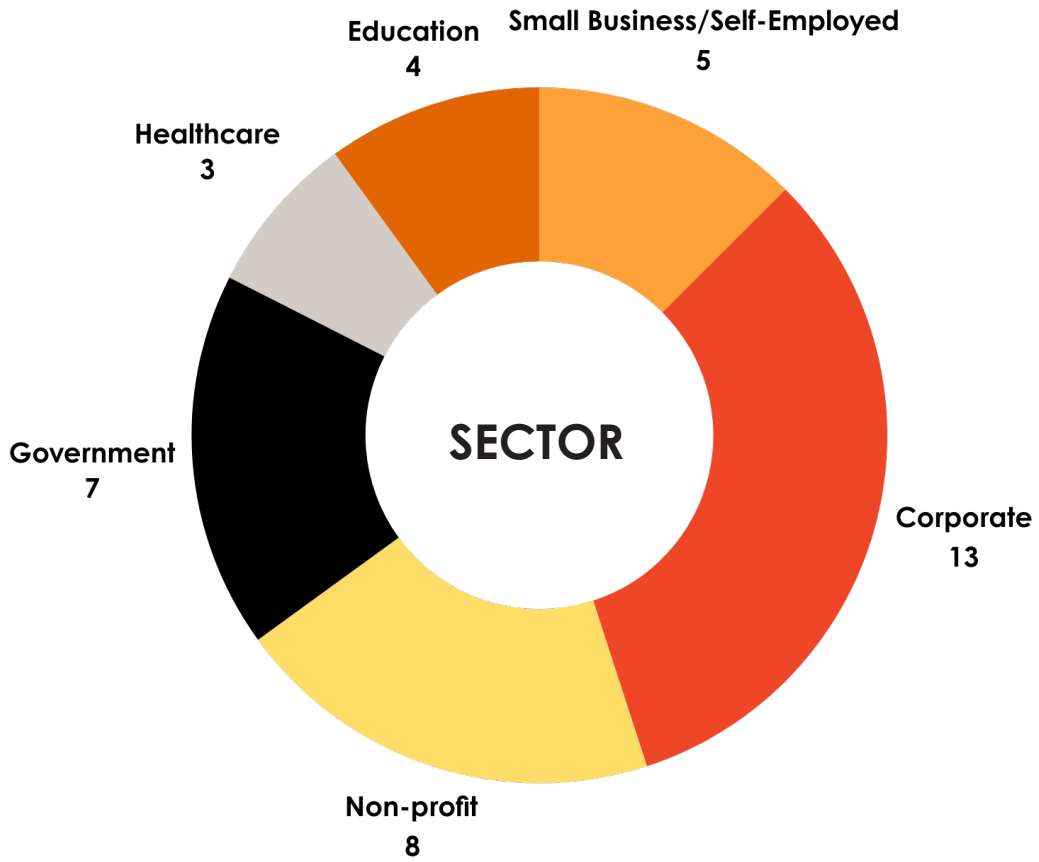
Academy Expectations

"The Academy experience exceeded my expectations before entering the program."

Class 2023 Demographics

"The experiences that I have gained in this program are vital to my development personally and professionally. My matriculation can only be described as invaluable and necessary for Black leaders anywhere."







Voices of the Class 2023 Fellows

“This experience was transformative for me. I am a much better CEO, community leader and public servant because of this experience.”

“This was such an amazing experience. I’m walking away with a sense of power rooted in knowing that who I am is more important than what I do. Thank you for giving me a space to see myself, which trumps how I want to be seen.”

“The experience that I have gained in this program are vital to my development personally and professionally. My matriculation can only be described as invaluable and necessary for Black leaders anywhere. I’ve shared my experience with friends across the country; sharing nuggets and strategies to help navigate their professional headwinds with success. Thank you.”

“Amazing, life-changing program that I am blessed to have been selected for. **I will remember this experience always.**”

“I am sooo glad I was chosen during this time to participate in the academy. I have learned so much about myself and have gained a wonderful network of people to connect with in this community.”

At the conclusion of the class experience, Fellows nominate and vote one individual to be a class speaker and another Fellow to serve on AALA’s Advisory Board.

Class 2023 Graduation Speakers:



Class 20 Speaker | Karen Hewitt
Director of DEI Strategic Partnerships at
Seminole Hard Rock Support Services



Class 21 Speaker | Casandra Steward
Director, HRBP at Ohio Health



Keynote Speaker, Michael Hyter
President of the National Executive
Leadership Council (ELC)

At the end of the Academy experience, Fellows indicate whether they have received a job promotion, compensation and salary increase, or assumed a NEW leadership role during their time in the program. The Academy is proud to see that **54% of Class 2023 indicated they successfully received a promotion of some kind.**



Here are some success stories as Fellows made intentional transitions in their profession and community impact.

At Work...



Makiva McIntosh (Class 20)

Associate Director of Development & Director of Annual Giving at The Wellington School
→ Chief Advancement & Engagement Officer, YWCA Columbus



Kellen Showes (Class 20)

Development Manager at The Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority
→ Director of Compliance at the Ohio Housing Finance Authority



Jamille Jones (Class 21)

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Senior Manager at Bath & Body Works
→ Director of Diversity and Inclusion, OhioHealth



Craig Conley (Class 22)

Regional Sales Manager at LinkedIn → Chief Revenue Officer at Tranztec

In the Community...

Chauna Mason, Sr. Specialist, Quality Compliance at Cardinal Health, selected as the Executive Director of the Junior League of Columbus

Stephanie Starks, CEO/Clinical Director
Starks Counseling & Consultation, LLC, elected as President of National Association of Social Workers (NASW)-OH

ALUMNI & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Alumni & Community Leadership Panel

Fellows of Classes 20 & 21 came together for the Alumni and Community Leadership Panel. The panel discussed the unwritten rules of leadership from the perspective of community leaders as well as through the lens of navigating leadership as an African American. Our 2023 panelists included:



Jason Jenkins – Class of 2010 (Cohort 10 Fellow)

City of Columbus Director of the Office of Diversity & Inclusion



Shayla Favor – Class of 2021 (Cohort 17 Fellow)

City of Columbus Councilmember



Charles Hillman – President & CEO

Named Chief Diversity Officer - Senior Director of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement at COSI (Center of Science and Industry)

Alumni INTENSIVES



ALUMNI INTENSIVE

Keepin' It Real: Tools to find & bring your authentic self to work



Dr. Melissa Crum
Speaker



Nichole Barnes Marshall
Speaker

11 JULY, 2023 @ 12PM

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The Academy hosts workshop and trainings led by Alumni, Board members, and community stakeholders to engage our Alumni Fellows in continuous learning and development opportunities. **Advisory Board Members, Nichole Barnes Marshall, Global Head of Inclusion and Diversity at Pinterest and Dr. Melissa Crum of Mosaic Education Network** led an interactive workshop engaging Alumni on the origins of contemporary workplace structure, the consequences of poor engagement, and how to show up at work the way you have always wanted.



2023 Alumni Fellows

HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES

AALA Alumni Fellows continue make progress in their careers and throughout the Central Ohio community! Check out some of the exciting accomplishments of our phenomenal Alumni who are impacting Columbus and beyond.



Olympia Della Flora of Class 8

Named new Superintendent of Marion City Schools



Tiffany Wright of Class 10

Named Board Member for Dress for Success Columbus



Charles Hill, Class 11 Fellow

Named Chief Diversity Officer - Senior Director of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement at COSI - Center of Science and Industry



Sheldon Johnson, Class 15 Fellow

Named Executive Director of Partners Achieving Community Transformation (PACT)



Mallory Donaldson, Class 18 Fellow

Nominated to the National Board of Directors with the YWCA



Terrance Hinton, Class 19 Fellow

Received The Ohio State University's Outstanding Lecturer Award from the Department of Sociology

Meet our Advisory Board

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR ADVISORY BOARD FOR YOUR COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION TO THE ACADEMY THROUGH YOUR ACTS OF SERVICE AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT.



An engaged Advisory Board serves in multiple capacities for the Academy's success such as informal mentors to current and alumni Fellows. Advisory Board members help to build connections and relationships between AALA and their organizations to further opportunities for community impact.



Doreen Delaney Crawley
EVP, Chief Operations Officer
Grange Insurance

“At Grange Insurance, we’re proud to continue our partnership with the African American Leadership Academy (AALA) and take Black leadership to another level in Central Ohio. Grange has long been a company that champions diversity, and we applaud the AALA for their important work in recognizing Black identity in the workplace and barriers to success. This unique program takes fellows on a learning journey of self-awareness, growth and transformation, ultimately helping these extraordinary individuals build upon and expand the leadership capabilities they have already demonstrated.

“

“Community leaders seemed to only know a handful of Black leaders. It was important to expand the pool, to add different voices to the conversation.”

- Yvette McGee Brown

PHOTO GALLERY



Yvette McGee Brown
Board Chair
*Partner-in-Charge, Diversity,
Inclusion, & Advancement
Jones Day*



Doreen DeLaney Crawley
*EVP, Chief Operations Officer
Grange Insurance*



Sandra Brummitt
*Vice President, Chief Procurement
and Corporate Services Officer
NiSource*



Kanika Glover
*JJCPJ/JDAI Program Director
Franklin County Court of Common Pleas*



Kim Campbell, Ph. D.
*Adjunct Faculty
Franklin University*



Stephanie Green
Board Vice Chair
*Senior Vice President,
Managing Director, Private Bank
Fifth Third Bank*



Bo Chilton
CEO
IMPACT Community Action



Tristan Hall
*Systems Vice President
Ohio Health*



Vinita Clements
*EVP, Chief Human Resources Officer
Nationwide*



Jeffrey Hammonds
*Vice President, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Bread Financial*



Dr. Melissa Crum
*Founder & CEO
Mosaic Education Network*



Kourtni Hatton
*Chief DEI Officer/
VP Community Engagement
United Way of Central Ohio*



Stephanie Hightower
President & CEO
Columbus Urban League



Dawn Tyler Lee
Founder & CEO
Forrest Street Consulting



Larry James
Partner
Crabbe, Brown & James, LLP



Almar Walter
*Vice President of Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion/Chief Diversity Officer*
Columbus State Community
College (CSCC)



Devray Kirkland
*Chief Diversity Officer - VP, Diversity
& Inclusion*
CardinalHealth



Storm Woods
*Vice President, Diversity, Equity
& Inclusion*
Battelle



Nichole Barnes Marshall
Global Head of Inclusion & Diversity
Pinterest



Donna James
Co-Executive Director
Managing Director
Lardon & Associates



Elon Simms
Vice President, Community Impact
Crane Group Company



Mo Wright
Co-Executive Director
President & CEO
RAMA Consulting



Qiana Stewart
Founder, CEO and Clinical Therapist
Fostering Hope; A Transformational
Wellness & Consulting Group, LLC



Academy SPONSORS

The African American Leadership Academy is grateful to the organizations below for supporting its mission. **This financial support enables central Ohio to anticipate and construct the bench of diverse leadership that is needed to be –and remain– a “best at” and inclusive community.** By partnering with the Academy, our sponsors bring more innovative and high-performing leadership teams to all sectors of our community. **Thanks to our generous sponsors, the Academy experience continues at no cost to our Fellows to ensure money is not a barrier to one’s development and mobility.**

- 5th Third **
- AEP
- Bread Financial
- Bath & Bodyworks
- Battelle
- Cardinal Health
- Columbus State Community College (CSCC)
- Crabbe Brown & James
- Crane Group
- Denison University
- Grange Insurance
- Lardon & Associates
- Mt. Carmel Health System
- Nationwide**
- NiSource
- Ohio Health
- PNC
- RAMA Consulting
- United Way of Central Ohio

** indicates a founding sponsor



Financial REPORTS

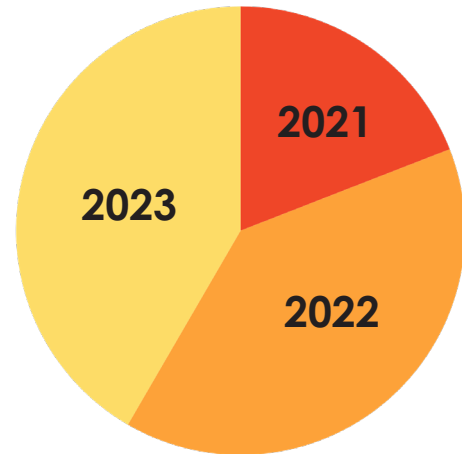
Highlighting new partnerships and sponsorship for the 2023 Program Year

Total Revenue / Sponsor Revenue Growth

The Academy cultivated three new partnerships with sponsor organizations for the 2023 program year. Four existing sponsors increased their gifts to the mission and work of the Academy

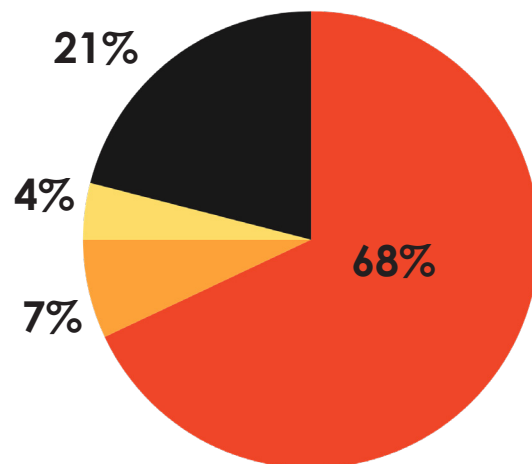
Growth in revenue from 2021 – 2022

- 2021 - **\$153,000**
- 2022 - **\$315,000**
- 2023 - **\$333,817**



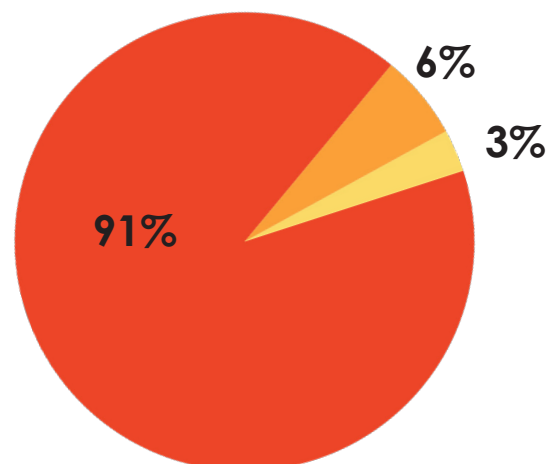
Revenue

- Private grants and corporate support – **68%**
- Board giving – **7%**
- Current Fellows & Alumni Giving, and Donor designation – **4%**
- Program Reinvestment – **21%**



Expenses

- Program Delivery – **91%**
- Program Support – **6%**
- Operations & Communications – **3%**





LIFE BY DESIGN:

"One of the greatest feelings in life is the conviction that you have lived the life you wanted to live—with the rough and the smooth, the good and the bad—but yours, shaped by your own choices, and not someone else's." - Michael Ignatieff

NOT BY DEFAULT

"You have tremendous freedom to choose how to think, interpret, and react in any given situation. Through this choice, you have the power to create and change conditions." - Adapted from Maya Angelou