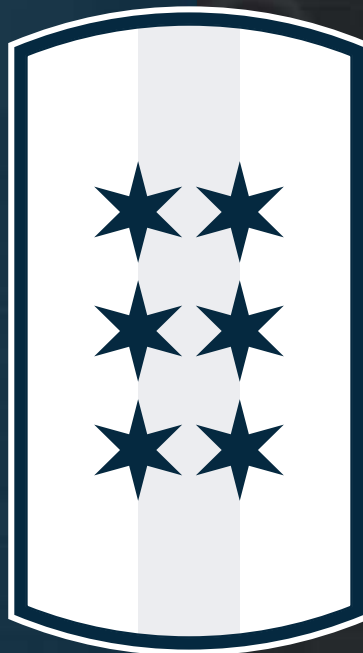


Community Leadership Fellows

COMMENCEMENT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2025



CLF
Identify + Amplify = Diversify

Community
Leadership
Fellows

Dear 2025 CLF Graduates,

Congratulations on reaching this important milestone! It takes courage to step into a space of growth to explore your leadership, to be open to challenge and reflection, and to say yes to the possibility of something greater, both for yourself and for your community.

As we celebrate you today, I want to gently remind us all: meaningful change rarely happens alone. Systems don't shift because one person moves forward in isolation. While independence is often celebrated, the idea that we can succeed without one another doesn't reflect how change truly happens in our communities.

Community leadership has always been a shared effort. It calls on us to show up, not just for ourselves, but for each other. It asks us to listen deeply, to collaborate intentionally, and to offer what we've learned in service of something bigger than any one of us.

CLF is not the end of the journey, it's a beginning. You leave this experience with tools, relationships, and insights that are meant to be shared, extended and rooted in the places and people you care about most.

My hope is that you carry this work forward, not later, but now. That you continue to show up for your community, for the next Fellow, and for the future you want to help build. Offer what you've gained with generosity and care, and continue growing alongside others.

Transformation only happens when we move together.

With deep respect and hope,



Alexandra Auguste
Co-founder & Executive Director

About CLF

An authentic commitment to honor the true spirit of diversity, equity and inclusion, Community Leadership Fellows (CLF) is a leadership development experience and a social change network that identifies, invests and develops overlooked talent from the Westside of Chicago. **It is time to put impactful, invested leaders in a position to create systemic, sustainable change for their communities.**

CLF's leadership incubator creates a streamlined pathway for promising grassroots leaders to the decision-making table - a space that has been vacant for far too long.

Fellows will gain the knowledge, develop the valuable relationships, skills, and tools they need to lead the revitalization of Westside communities.

We support emerging leaders. Our changemakers engage with programming designed specifically for Black and Brown leaders, emphasizing the creation of viable professional development pathways to the highest levels of leadership in private, public and governmental agencies and organizations.

Do nothing about me without me.

Our inclusive leadership model allows the community to have a voice, claim ownership of ideas and have a vested interest in the success of CLF.

CLF offers a yearly cohort of 15-20 fellows from the six Westside neighborhoods:

- ★ Austin
- ★ East Garfield Park
- ★ West Garfield Park
- ★ Little Village
- ★ North Lawndale
- ★ West Humboldt Park

Schedule of Events

★ Featured Performer

The Third

★ Welcome Remarks

Alexandra Auguste
CLF Co-Founder & Executive Director

★ Fellows Address

Nachelle Pugh
Executive Director
John Walt Foundation

★ Keynote Address

Bree Perry
Program Officer
The Joyce Foundation

★ Presentation of Certificates

★ Program Concludes

LIVE HERE ★ WORK HERE ★ LEAD HERE

The Third ★ Featured Performer

The Third is a Chicago based Rapper/Producer and educator from the south side of Chicago. He started writing around ten years old and was greatly inspired by poetry from his father and work by his mentor (Geoffrey "Dr. Groove" Watts).

"The Third" has featured on shows such as "The Daily Show", "Hamilton: The Musical", Pitchfork 2019, and WGN TV. In May 2019, The Third released his debut EP "Cursive" which covered his processes of moving forward, staying happy through hardship, and his love for family and friends.

Third writes to inform his listeners about local issues, inspire change and higher thinking, and document the stories of the underrepresented.

You can follow him on Instagram @thethirdraps and can find all of his music, including his latest EP entitled "Sincerely" on Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes, Deezer or on your favorite music platform.



LIVE HERE ★ WORK HERE ★ LEAD HERE

Bree Perry ★ Keynote Speaker

Bree Perry is the program officer for the Lend A Hand Fund at the Joyce Foundation. The Joyce Foundation is a private, nonpartisan philanthropy that invests in public policies and strategies to advance racial equity and economic mobility for the next generation in the Great Lakes region.

The Lend a Hand Fund was formed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the disproportionate impact on Chicago communities facing persistent structural inequities. The Foundation established the Lend a Hand Fund to provide support to front-line community organizations, supporting BIPOC-led and BIPOC-serving organizations that are hardest hit by COVID-19 and the impacts of systemic racism in Chicago.

She also serves as the program officer for the foundation's journalism program. Previously, Bree was the program associate for the Fund and the Journalism program.

Prior to joining Joyce in 2013, Bree was a career strategist for Career Builder. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from DeVry University.



LIVE HERE ★ WORK HERE ★ LEAD HERE

★ LITTLE VILLAGE



Cristy Calderon

xtycalderon18



**CRISTY
CALDERON**

Constituent Services Director
22nd Ward

NORTH LAWDALE ★



**APRIEL
CAMPBELL**

Community Leader

A white, stylized signature of Apriel Campbell on a dark blue background with a hexagonal pattern.

aprielcrystal

★ NORTH LAWNDALE



PATRICK BILL DANIELS

A white, stylized cursive signature of Patrick Bill Daniels on a dark blue background with a repeating hexagonal pattern.

Founder and Senior Consultant
The Bill & Margie Daniels Foundation and RAO 25

AUSTIN ★



JOHNNY DANIELS

Dean of Students / Curriculum Developer
Tilton Elementary/ ICFS Consultancy

Johnny Daniels

📷 johnnyjd112

★ WEST HUMBOLD PARK



Cyndi Delira-Rendón

**CYNDI
DELIRA- RENDÓN**

sindee_licious 

Head of Impact
Code Your Dreams

LITTLE VILLAGE ★



VIANEY DOMINGUEZ

Operations Associate
Fitch Ratings

A white, stylized handwritten signature of Vianey Dominguez on a dark blue background with a hexagonal pattern.

busyveee29

★ AUSTIN



Shantel Franklin

shantelsellsproperties



**SHANTEL
FRANKLIN**

Legislative Liaison & Licensed Realtor
Office of the Illinois Attorney General

AUSTIN ★

JOSEPH GREEN

Director of Workforce and Job Development
Westside Health Authority



 mrgreenjos

★ NORTH LAWINDALE



Lillian Holden

holden_nature 

**LILLIAN
HOLDEN**

Founder
Holden Nature

NORTH LAWNDALÉ ★



**ROBBIE
JOHNSON**

Outreach Community Coordinator
The Firehouse Community Arts Center

*Robbie
Johnson*

📷 [thee_network_queen](#)

★ NORTH LAWNGDALE



A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, reading "Kobe Lofton".

kobey_not_kobe 

**KOBEY
LOFTON**

Youth Advocate/Activist
Peace Warriors

AUSTIN ★



NACHELE PUGH

Executive Director
John Walt Foundation

Nachele Pugh

© nachelepugh

★ WEST GARFIELD PARK



SAMANTHA
TAYLOR

Samantha Taylor

inever_changed 

Chef/Owner

Samtee Catering | Healthy Food Justice & Equity Strategist

NORTH LAWDALE ★



MARKAYLE TOLLIVER

Project Manager
City of Chicago Treasurer's Office

Markayle Tolliver



iammarkt

★ AUSTIN



Janeicia Williams

**JANEICIA
WILLIAMS**

Community Ecosystem Manager
Project Exploration

nvision_us



AUSTIN ★



TRINITY WOODARD

Administrator
The 411 Movement For Pierre Loury

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Trinity Woodard". The signature is stylized and cursive.

© i_am_trinitysapphire

Community Leadership Fellows extends its heartfelt thanks to each and every person who has invested their time, effort, resources, and ideas to develop Westside leaders.

GUEST SPEAKERS AND TRAINING SESSION HOSTS

Dee Atkins, Chief of Community Engagement and Equity, Thresholds
Soledad Adrianzén McGrath, JD, Executive Director at CORNERS; Professor, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University
Elianne Bahena, District Chief of Staff, 22nd Ward, CLF '23 Alum
Foster Branch, Program Director at Thresholds South
Natanja Craig Oquendo, Executive Director, Boston Women's Fund
Christopher Crater, Manager, My Brother's Keeper, Obama Foundation
Dion Dawson, Founder of Dion's Chicago Dream
Jeffrey Gilbert, Vice President of Clinical Operations, Thresholds
Kate Guedj, Senior Vice President and Chief Philanthropy Officer at The Boston Foundation
Laura Gutierrez, Program Officer, Builders Initiative
Jackie Hoffman, Founder and Executive Director of Peace Runners 773, CLF '23 Alum
Ashley Howard, Club Director, Rusu-McCartin Club
Juanita Irizarry, Founder and Principal, iJuanita: Juanita Irizarry's Social Impact Studio
Mark Ishaug, Chief Executive Officer, Thresholds
Kathy Kerney, (Retired) Executive Assistant to the CEO, Thresholds
Lisbeth Leanos, Deputy Director of Government & Legislative Affairs, Office of the President at Cook County Government
Keith Lewis, Senior Director of Community Collaboration, University of Illinois at Chicago
Robert Lewis, Jr., President and CEO, Boys and Girls Club of Boston
Orlando "Chilly" Mayorga, Program Officer, Polk Bros. Foundation
Elisabeth Siciliano, Vice President, Obama Foundation
Shawn Smith, MD, Pediatric Hospitalist at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital
Michael Strautmanis, Executive Vice President, Civic Engagement, Obama Foundation
Khameron Townsend-Riley, Community Coordinator, UIC Neighborhood Center
Jonathan VanderBrug, Program Officer, Chicago Commitment, MacArthur Foundation
Garth Walker, MD, Chief Medical Officer at Rush Health
Julie Wilen, Executive Director at Pritzker Foundation

INSTRUCTORS

Shannon Bennett, Executive Director of Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization (KOCO)
Khalil Cotton, Youth Mentor at KOCO
Jhmira Alexander, President and Executive Director, Public Narrative
Jitu Brown, National Director, Journey for Justice Alliance
Dr. Angelique Orr, CLF Curriculum Facilitator | Executive Director of Westside Rising
Carolyn L. Vessel, President & Chief Executive Officer, I AM ABLE Center for Family Development

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Elianne Bahena, District Chief of Staff, 22nd Ward
Cornelia Hailey-Gamble, President, Kells Park Community Council
Jermaine Harris, Lieutenant, Chicago Police Department
Yolanda Knight, Managing Director, Steans Family Foundation
Adam Levine, President, Circle of Service Foundation
Keith Lewis, Sr., Director of Community Collaboration, University of Illinois Chicago
Aisha Oliver, Executive Director Root2Fruit Youth Foundation; CEO/Principal Consultant, Village Voice Consulting
Victoria Watkins, Founder and Managing Partner, Inrichmint
Julie Wilen, Executive Director at Pritzker Foundation

INVESTORS COUNCIL

Elayne Granger, Director - External Affairs, AT&T (Retired)
Joe Kelly, Senior Vice President, Wells Fargo
Kelsey Malnati Howell, Executive Director, Marc and Jeanne Malnati Family Foundation
Lindsay Marciniak, Managing Director, CCS Fundraising
Harold Rice, Jr., President & CEO, CEDA
Michael Rodriguez, Alderman, 22nd Ward, City of Chicago
Elisabeth Siciliano, Senior Vice President, Obama Foundation

DONORS

Anonymous
Builders Initiative
Joyce Foundation
Lohengrin Foundation
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Marc and Jeanne Malnati Family Foundation
Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation
Steans Family Foundation
The Chicago Bulls
The JAL Fund

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Kola Adebola, Chicago Bulls
Charles Anderson, Principal, Michele Clark High School
Vania Arroyo, Vania Arroyo Photography
Erica Bauer, Community Health
Madelyn Fainga'a, Chicago Bulls
Courtney Gibson, Antidote Inc.
Global Leadership Network
Mónica Gutierrez, Chicago Bulls
Ashley Howard, Rusu-McCartin Boys & Girls Club
Patti Jenkins, Taproots
Bradly Johnson, Build Inc.
Barbara Meschino, Dean, West Side Learning Center Malcolm X College
Johnetta Oliver, J Oliver Photography
Partners and Crime Catering
Mercedes Pickett, Earth's Remedies, CLF '2023
Adrienne Scherenzel, Chicago Bulls
Self Help Bank, Little Village
Virginia Sonnenschein, Taproots
Keli Stewart, Front Porch Arts Center
Ms. Ruby Taylor, Taproots
Chris Thomas, YourPassion1st
Trinisa Williams, Trini's Tasty Pastries
Faheem Willis, Taproots

CLF TEAM

Alexandra Auguste, CLF Co-founder and Executive Director
Jeremiah Ingram, Marketing and Design Consultant
Dr. Angelique Orr, Curriculum Facilitator
Bret Townsend, Professional Development and Training Specialist
Carlos Ivan Arroyo Jr., CEO, Flava Podcast
Francía García Hernández, Local Journalist and Writer

CLF OPERATES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO

Community Leadership Fellows is a program of United Way of Metro Chicago designed to support and develop grass-roots leaders who are driving impactful change in Chicago's Westside communities. United Way of Metro Chicago's commitment to strengthening neighborhoods aligns closely with CLF's mission. This program fosters a collaborative effort to create lasting, positive change in communities across the city.

CLFELLOWS.ORG

LIVE
WORK
LEAD **HERE**