



For Immediate Release

Contact: *Rebecca Kusner*
614-404-3882;
rkusner@r4workforce.com

Ohio Workforce Coalition Introduces Inaugural Fellows of Local Workforce Leadership Academy
Partnership offers opportunity for local workforce ecosystem capacity building and growth.

[March 15, 2023], Cleveland, Ohio - The Ohio Workforce Coalition (OWC) is excited to announce the members of the Cleveland|Cuyahoga Workforce Leadership Academy (Academy), a fellowship designed to build capacity in the local workforce ecosystem and present innovative solutions to challenges faced by workers or businesses.

The yearlong Academy was developed by the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program and launched in Ohio by the OWC in partnership with the Northeast Ohio Workforce Coalition (NEOWC). The Academy engages leaders in retreats and workshops as they come together to advance innovation and equity. "Ohio's workforce ecosystems are full of professionals committed to jobseekers, front-line workers, and employers." said Rebecca Kusner, Director of OWC. She added "We hope to create a space where they can engage in deep discussions, grow relationships, and build their knowledge of local systems and how systems can evolve."

The 24 Fellows of the Cleveland|Cuyahoga Academy are:

Angel Reyes-Rodriguez , Cleveland State University	Melissa Russoniello , El Barrio and The Centers
Crystal Reed , Salus Group	Ron Scott , Towards Employment
Devin Cotten , Universal Basic Employment & Opportunity	Salome Harris , Cuyahoga Community College
Danielle Crawford , Deaconess Foundation	Paul Bounds , Cuyahoga County Job & Family Services
Erin Riffle , Greater Cleveland Partnership	Rachel Benders , OhioMeansJobs Cleveland-Cuyahoga
Goren Dillard , Urban League of Greater Cleveland	Rahim Nichols , Early College Early Career at MAGNET
Grace Heffernan , Northeast Ohio Worker Center	Ray Nejadfard , Cuyahoga Community College
Juan Carlos Medina Santana , Spanish American Committee	Katherine Hollingsworth , The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland
Nicki Price , College Now Greater Cleveland	Nicole Rosenbaum , Cleveland Foundation
Kelly Camlin , Enterprise Community Partners	Sheri Dozier , Cleveland Neighborhood Progress
Maura Gaul , United Labor Agency	Tanya Budler , Rise Together
Melaak Rashid , Smart Development Inc.	Tiffany Short , The MetroHealth Hospital

"I look forward to the collective contributions of this inaugural cohort. Aspen's curriculum allows Fellows to think critically and apply innovative strategies to advance workforce development in Cuyahoga County while uplifting a racial equity and belonging perspective – a valuable contribution." Dr. LaShon Sawyer, NEOWC.

The Academy launches in April and will culminate with a collaborative capstone project presentation at the end of the year. The Academy is made possible with support from The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program, local partners (Towards Employment, The Literacy Cooperative, NewBridge, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, and MAGNET) and philanthropy (Deaconess Foundation, Cuyahoga County Workforce Funders Group, Walmart, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation).

This Academy is the latest of [Workforce Leadership Academies](#) hosted in communities across the U.S. and Canada. The Academy is led by Rebecca Kusner ([Ohio Workforce Coalition](#)) and Dr. LaShon Sawyer ([Northeast Ohio Workforce Coalition](#)) with advice and guidance from a local Advisory Council. For more information about the Advisory Council and the Academy, visit <https://www.ohioworkforcecoalition.org/wla>.

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