



## Workforce Leadership Academies Participant Overview

### What is the New Orleans Workforce Leadership Academy?

The New Orleans Business Alliance, the Aspen Institute, and local stakeholders are partnering to create a Workforce Leadership Academy for workforce development professionals in the New Orleans area. The purpose of this Academy is to develop a network of workforce development leaders who are not only able to lead their own programs or organizations, but who can also work collaboratively to build effective workforce systems.

Workforce Leadership Academies create and support peer-learning communities of workforce leaders from nonprofit organizations, business associations, community colleges and universities, union-based training efforts, and public agencies. Participants in Academies work with leading practitioners from around the country, learn about practical planning tools, and have the rare opportunity to reflect on and develop effective workforce strategies to strengthen their local workforce system. Participants also engage in leadership development activities, including a 360-degree leadership assessment. Fellows are selected in a competitive application process and are typically senior-level managers with authority to implement program changes. Alumni of the Academies are part of the Aspen Institute [Economic Opportunity Fellows Network](#).

### What opportunities does the Academy address?

Today, New Orleans is experiencing growth and investment across key sectors, including healthcare and technology. Our challenge is to utilize equity as a growth strategy that positively impacts residents and businesses alike. Toward this goal, workforce development has been shown to help individuals prepare for and connect to better quality jobs than they might secure on their own. However, our workforce system is often siloed, and partners can lack access to the full range of tools and assets available within our community of partners. Effective workforce development strategies are also complex, and frequently require collaboration to work across organizations or to engage with businesses in new ways.

Developing a leadership base that deeply understands and can successfully navigate the complexities and opportunities within New Orleans' workforce system is key to strengthening economic opportunity and equity. Our workforce system requires strong organizations with capable leaders who understand the local labor market and can bring together resources matched with innovative strategies. A workforce development leadership experience in New Orleans will help ensure that a strong pool of connected and diverse leadership talent exists to advance economic growth and equitable opportunities for all citizens.

### What are the goals of the Academy?

The Academy will address the following key goals:

- Support a 12-month fellowship among leaders from across the workforce development system including leaders from nonprofit organizations, business associations, community colleges and universities, union-based training efforts, and public (city and state) agencies.
- Provide a forum to work collaboratively to identify local and regional systems-based challenges and create shared solutions.
- Build the capacity of participating institutions to collaborate more deeply with employers and other

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strategic partners.

- Deepen skills and competencies of workforce practitioners to lead within their organizations and work collaboratively with stakeholders across the local workforce system.

## How did the Academy get started?

Since 2012, the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program has collaborated with local and regional organizations to offer Workforce Leadership Academies. Recent academies have taken place in Seattle, Maryland, Toronto, Detroit, and Hartford. These academies evolved from the Economic Opportunities Program's long-running national Sector Skills Academy. The national Sector Skills Academy has documented success in supporting workforce leaders to develop and implement effective workforce strategies. In a 2015 survey of more than 200 national alumni, respondents indicated that the Academy prepared them to effect meaningful change at the local level, create and strengthen partnerships with critical stakeholders, and strategize beyond their individual organizations for policy and systems change. The national Academy also provided participants access to a unique and valuable network of peers.

## What are systems changes?

Long-term, sustainable solutions to workforce challenges often require strategies designed to overcome structural issues faced by workers. The Workforce Leadership Academy draws on the Economic Opportunities Program's systems change framework. "Systems change" refers to:

- **Industry practices** that shape the way individuals are recruited, hired, trained, promoted and compensated within the workplace.
- The **education and training infrastructure** (including Workforce Investment Boards, community-based training providers, community colleges, union or apprenticeship programs).
- **Public policy**, including rules, regulations, and funding streams related to the workforce and education systems as well as those that influence business practices.

Using practical tools, Fellows will explore strategies focused on systems changes, including "raising the floor" and "building career ladders" for workers; responding to industry needs within and across sectors; and navigating the workforce policy and funding environment. Fellows also bring systems thinking to issues of race, ethnicity, and gender, including how these impact opportunities in the labor market and service delivery strategies. Fellows have an opportunity to step back from their day-to-day experiences to reflect on their own leadership style and the role of their organization within the local system.

For more information on systems change, please see the Economic Opportunities Program's paper [Sectoral Strategies for Low-Income Workers: Lessons from the Field](#).

## Who is qualified to participate?

Appropriate applicants are:

- Located and working within the New Orleans region.
- Workforce development representatives working within nonprofit organizations, business associations, community colleges and universities, union-based training efforts, and public agencies.

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- In a position of leadership and decision-making authority related to workforce development efforts, with the capacity and ability to execute strategies on behalf of their organization.
- Engaged in or planning workforce development efforts in the New Orleans region related to connecting workers to quality jobs and/or career pathways.
- Interested in designing and implementing effective strategies to strengthen their local workforce system.
- Committed to achieving equity across race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- Eager for the opportunity to collaborate with others in their local workforce system, to reflect on their current work, to explore leadership practices, and to gain feedback from colleagues.

Inclusivity and diversity are core values of the New Orleans Workforce Leadership Academy. Applicants of color are strongly encouraged to apply. The cohort will be established to represent diversity of organization type, industry focus, as well as race, ethnicity, and gender.

### **What is my commitment?**

Each Fellow is expected to engage in 12 days of in-person sessions as well as continued learning, application, and collaboration between sessions. Participants are asked to commit to the process in writing and agree to fully participate in:

- An Academy opening three-day retreat, scheduled for March 20-22, 2019. The opening retreat requires two overnight stays at the Lod Cook Alumni Center on LSU's campus in Baton Rouge.
- A series of five full-day workshops scheduled between April and December 2019. These sessions will take place in New Orleans. These sessions will run a full day, typically 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.
  - April 11, 2019
  - May 16, 2019
  - July 18, 2019
  - September 19, 2019
  - October 17, 2019
- Continued learning, application, and collaboration between workshop sessions (self-directed time of up to two hours between sessions as well as nine to 12 hours of collaborative project work across a small team of Fellows).
- A closing three-day retreat scheduled for November 13-15, 2019. The closing retreat requires two overnight stays at the Lod Cook Alumni Center on LSU's campus in Baton Rouge.
- A final, one-day reflective session on December 12, 2019 that includes a Collaborative Learning Lab presentation to local and regional workforce development stakeholders at the New Orleans Business Alliance (1250 Poydras Street, Suite 2150).

Fellows commit to participate fully and actively in all New Orleans Workforce Leadership Academy events, both to enhance their individual experience and to contribute to peer learning for the group.

### **Is there a cost to participate?**

The program cost per participant is \$500, which assists with meeting costs and program materials. Financial assistance is available on an as-needed basis to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation.

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## Application Process and Deadline

We will hold an Academy Information Session on **Thursday, January 10, 2019** from **10:00 am to 11:00 am** to review the program and answer questions. An audio recording of this information session will be made available. Register for the webinar [here](#).

The New Orleans Workforce Leadership Academy application deadline is **Friday, January 25, 2019 at 5:00 pm CT**.

Applications will be reviewed and approved by members of the New Orleans Workforce Leadership Academy Local Advisory Council. All applicants will be notified of the status of their applications by Tuesday, February 19, 2019.

Access to all application materials and forms can be found at:  
<https://www.nolaba.org/news-media/workforce-leadership-academy/>.

### The materials for submission include:

- A completed application submitted online
- Your resume and/or link to your LinkedIn page
- Organizational chart
- Letter of reference from a supervisor or external collaboration partner
- Commitment to participate form signed by you and your supervisor

## Academy Facilitation Team

### New Orleans Business Alliance

NOLABA, a non-profit organization, is led by a 17-member board of directors composed of a cross-section of New Orleans leaders, including the Mayor and representatives of the city's diverse industries. As the city's official economic development partnership, NOLABA is focused on creating greater economic security for more New Orleanians. An accredited economic development organization (AEDO) since April 2017, NOLABA was formed in 2010 at the behest of Mayor Mitch Landrieu and a coalition of business and civic leaders to employ the best practices in economic development to re-position New Orleans as the ideal intersection of commerce and culture. In 2018, via a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement, NOLABA will now endeavor to connect economic development efforts to workforce development efforts in support of talent attraction efforts. NOLABA will formally provide programmatic and innovation services to the New Orleans Workforce Development Board to bring together employers, job seekers and workforce organizations, by industry sector, to help guide the agenda for workforce preparation. This integration will provide programmatic supports to sustain the effort to create career pathways for job seekers and talent pipelines for employers.

### The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington DC. Its mission is to spark intellectual inquiry and exchange, create a diverse worldwide community of leaders committed to the greater good, and provide a nonpartisan forum for reaching solutions on vital public policy issues. The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program advances promising strategies and policies to help low- and moderate-income Americans connect to and thrive in a changing economy. Over its 25 years of work, the Economic Opportunities Program has focused on expanding individuals' opportunities to connect to quality work, to start businesses, and to build assets and economic stability.

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## **New Orleans Local Advisory Council Members**

Angela Shiloh Cryer, Director of Integrated Partnerships, *Strive NOLA*

Thelma French, President, *Total Community Action, Inc.*

Nicole Jolly, Director of Employment & Mobility Pathways Linked for Opportunity Youth (EMPLOY), *Tulane University*

Erin Landry, Director of Adult Education, *Delgado Community College*

Steve Lassalle, District Administrator, *Department of Corrections (LA)*

Ellen M. Lee, Director of Community and Economic Development, *City of New Orleans*

Lacy McManus, Director of Program Management, *Greater New Orleans, Inc.*

Sean Perkins, Executive Director of Citywide Education Initiatives, *Orleans Parish School Board*

Carmen Randolph, Vice President for Programs, *Greater New Orleans Foundation*

Cate Swinburn, President, *Youthforce NOLA*

Sunae Villavaso, Deputy Director, Office of Workforce Development - *City of New Orleans*

Erika Wright, Vice President of Global Philanthropy, *JP Morgan Chase*

## **Need additional information?**

If you have any questions about the New Orleans Workforce Leadership Academy, your eligibility to apply, or the application process, please email:

Sheldon Ballom

New Orleans Business Alliance

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If you experience technical difficulties with the application submission, please email:

Tony Mastria, Digital Communications Associate

The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program

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