

# *Lead*DIVERSITY

*Developing LEADERS in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging*

**2025-2026**



Hector Alvarado II  
Enbridge Gas Ohio,  
UVVUA LocalG-555,  
Class of 2025

Peggy Keating  
Neighborhood Family  
Practice,  
Class of 2024

Raphael Collins  
Cleveland Guardians,  
Class of 2023

Sandy Youssef  
The Albert M. Higley  
Company  
Class of 2022

Andrea Lyons  
United Way of  
Greater Cleveland  
Class of 2021

Rebecca Scina  
Hyland  
Class of 2020

Chris Hamilton  
Lincoln Electric  
Class of 2019

Addisah Sherwood  
Benesch, Friedlander,  
Coplan & Aronoff LLP  
Class of 2018



A Program of The Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio

# Developing Leaders in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging

*LeadDIVERSITY is a program in which a select group of professionals engage with community leaders & one another to raise the participants' awareness of diversity, equity, inclusion, & belonging issues, build their leadership skills, & enhance their network. Each session is designed to help participants explore the concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, & leadership & to analyze its personal, workplace, & community impact.*

## CLASS COMPOSITION

Participants of *LeadDIVERSITY* will be from various corporate, non-profit, governmental, and community organizations. The program is for anyone who has an interest in the impact of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at work, in their personal lives and/or communities.

## PROCESS

The *LeadDIVERSITY* program approaches diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging and leadership issues from a no-fault, interactive foundation with the goal of affecting positive change. Emphasis is placed on personal and professional growth through self-reflection and group participation as well as knowledge and practical skill enrichment. The class will meet in-person to engage with regional leaders in the corporate, non-profit, and civic arenas who hold diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging as high values. Group members also look to one another throughout the year as a source for information, experience, and dialogue.

## PROGRAM GOALS

### Participants Gain:

- A greater awareness of personal identity, intersectionality, & systemic oppression.
- An expanded knowledge of local experts, organizations, and resources.
- A tool kit for addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, equity, & belonging in personal & professional settings.
- An ability to be an advocate for inclusion & equity.

### Organizations Gain:

- Employees with an increased understanding of the connection between inclusion, belonging & organizational success.
- Employees with enhanced organizational leadership skills & a vision for the future.
- Resources & community connections.

## APPLICATION AND SELECTIVITY

Each year's class of up to 35 individuals is selected through a competitive application process. The selection committee seeks applicants with proven leadership skills who have exhibited a strong community commitment. For questions, please contact Jessica A. Daigler at [jdaigler@diversitycenterneo.org](mailto:jdaigler@diversitycenterneo.org) or (216) 752-3000.

**Applications must be submitted by Monday, July 14, 2025.**

You will be notified of your status in the class by Friday, August 29, 2025.

## PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

The *LeadDIVERSITY* program consists of 9 sessions and Graduation. The first session is mandatory. Programming will include in-person sessions, seminars, small group breakouts, personal reflection, conversations with Northeast Ohio's prominent leaders, in-depth facilitated group activities and discussion, and program evaluation.

Full participation is essential to the *LeadDIVERSITY* experience. Recognizing that illness and changes in business schedules can occur, participants may miss no more than two sessions. Missing more than two sessions will jeopardize participant's eligibility for graduation.

## LeadDIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

*LeadDIVERSITY* is a program of The Diversity Center and reflects The Diversity Center's emphasis on building equitable communities where all people feel respected, connected, and valued. Upon completion of the program, graduates are encouraged to become active members of the *LeadDIVERSITY* Alumni Association, which provides ongoing diversity, equity, inclusion & belonging leadership development opportunities and social gatherings benefiting Alumni and current class members.

*"My time in the 2025 LeadDIVERSITY cohort has been transformative and eye-opening. Engaging with such a passionate group has sparked growth in many areas of my life. Every session was rewarding and inspiring, motivating me to deepen my understanding of diversity and champion it in both my personal and professional life."*

*-Katie Waggoner, Enbridge Gas Ohio, Class of 2025*

## PROGRAM DATES 2025-2026

## TUITION & PAYMENT

### LAYING THE FOUNDATION ~Mandatory Session~

Explore group dynamics, communication, and unconscious bias while getting to know your classmates.

**September 23, 2025 (9-4)**

### IDENTITY— Community Partner: *Saint Ignatius High School*

Examine your own identities and their intersections with privilege, and oppression along with ways to take action.

**October 16, 2026 (9-5)**

### SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

Learn how oppression works at various levels and how that impacts our understanding of ourselves, others, our organizations, and communities.

**November 11, 2025 (9-5)**

### STOP THE HATE — Community Partner: *Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage*

Discover collections from the Museum, hear from a Holocaust Survivor, and discuss examples of discrimination today.

**December 8, 2025 (9-4)**

### ALLIES, ACCOMPLICES, & ACTION

Explore being an ally, accomplice, and co-conspirator for personal and institutional change.

**January 13/14/15, 2026 (9-5)**

### INCLUSION & BELONGING — Community Partner: *Hyland*

Learn about creating inclusion and belonging at work through an examination of culture, ERGs, and accountability, and delve into discussions on racial equity and justice.

**February 12, 2026 (9-5)**

### CREATING CHANGE— Community Partner: *Metro RTA*

Explore change and the roles we can take on in creating new paths for ourselves, organizations, and communities.

**March 11, 2026 (9-5)**

### EQUITY IN COMMUNITIES

Tour the city of Cleveland and hear from community leaders to learn about serving diverse neighborhoods, and building equity in communities.

**April 16, 2026 (9-4)**

### ETHICAL LEADERSHIP — Community Partner: *Enbridge Gas Ohio*

Take time to think about your own ethical principles, then use a framework to explore ethical decision making, and plan for your next steps.

**May 12, 2026 (9-4)**

### GRADUATION— Community Partner: *Eaton*

Gather to celebrate your experience as a class with Diversity Center Staff, Board, and your invited guests.

**June 2, 2026 (4:30-7:30)**

- Tuition for each participant in the *LeadDIVERSITY* Class of 2026 is \$4,500.
- Applicants may be sponsored by their employers, or with agreement from their employer, may sponsor themselves.
- A limited number of partial scholarships are available based on financial need.

*"LeadDIVERSITY helped me to find my own voice and exceeded my expectations. I am very grateful for this experience!"*

*Judith Padua, Lorain County Children Services, Class of 2021*

For more information or to request an additional application, contact Jessica A. Daigler at

The Diversity Center

[jdaigler@diversitycenterneo.org](mailto:jdaigler@diversitycenterneo.org)

or 216.752.3000

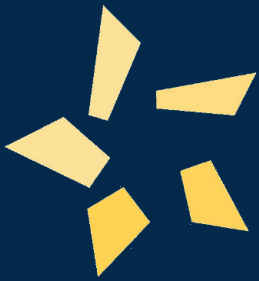
Applications available online

[www.diversitycenterneo.org/leaddiversity](http://www.diversitycenterneo.org/leaddiversity)

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**The Gries Family Foundation**





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*"LeadDIVERSITY has been a bright spot in my year. The teachings, experiences, and people are powerful, and being a member of this cohort opened up a new layer of community for me that continually unfolds month-after-month."*

What I've learned through *LeadDIVERSITY* has stayed with me. It informs my thinking, yes, but more than anything it's shown me that there's work to be done, and we need one another to do it."

-Cat Geletka, Saint Ignatius High School, Class of 2025

*"LeadDIVERSITY is a life-changing experience. This program takes DEIB from concept, to practice, to application. I have gained knowledge and skills that will serve me in my work and my daily life for years to come. I'm forever grateful to this program and the opportunity to learn with and get to know my classmates."*

- Erin Thompson, Highland Software, Class of 2024

*"LeadDIVERSITY provided a place for me to truly take my understanding of and advocacy for diversity, equity, and inclusion to the next level. Having open and honest small group discussions with professionals from various fields and backgrounds was incredibly valuable and impactful."*

- Wendy Leatherberry, Every Woman Treaty, Class of 2023



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[www.diversitycenterneo.org](http://www.diversitycenterneo.org)  
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*The Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio is a human relations organization dedicated to eliminating bias, bigotry, and racism. Founded in 1927 as The National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), The Diversity Center has been working in Northeast Ohio for over 90 years to help create communities where everyone is connected, respected, and valued. The Diversity Center is a founding member of The National Federation for Just Communities, a network of more than 20 diversity focused organizations across the country.*