2023 Minnesota Young American Leaders Program Cohort Announcement

After a highly competitive selection process, we are pleased to announce the 2023 cohorts for the Minnesota Young American Leaders Program. Thank you to those of you who nominated so many talented young leaders. Our selection committees spent considerable time in an in-depth review and discussion of all applicants. We are so grateful and commend their diligent and tough deliberations to select the final cohorts. Together these rising leaders represent a unique force for expanding the power of cross-sectoral collaboration for our region and our state.

Please join us in congratulating these rising Minnesotan leaders and saluting their commitment to collaborate across differences for the shared prosperity of our region and state, and read on for more information about the Program:

**2023 – Northeast MN - Duluth Cohort**
Nick Bayuk, North Shore Bank  
Ben Benoit, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe  
Carson Gorecki, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development  
Vicki Hagberg, Northland Foundation  
Amber Lewis, Lead for America/Americorps/American Connection Corps/Northspan  
ChaQuanna McEntyre, Family Rise Together  
Jessalyn Sabin, Minnesota North College  
Sumair Sheikh, LISC Duluth

**2023 – Fargo - Moorhead Cohort**
Josey Balenger, FM Science Museum  
Laura Caroon, Trive  
Michael Chan, Concordia  
Sabrina Dawson Souls, Talercris  
Katherine Grindberg, FMWF Chamber  
Casey Sanders, City of West Fargo  
Julia Schott, Cultural Diversity Resources  
Jenny Sheets, Emerging Prairie

**2023 – Mankato Cohort**
Chris Dalton, City of New Ulm  
Ashley Eimer, Mankato Area Foundation  
Laura Koch, Profinium  
Courtney Kramlinger, City of Mankato  
Ayan Omar, MN Department of Commerce  
Claire Richie, Taylor Corporation  
Colin Scharf, Gold Mine Studios Audio/Visual and Event Production Studio  
Christi Wilking, Mayo Clinic Health System
2023 – Minneapolis - Saint Paul Cohort
Shanaya Dungey, African American Leadership Forum
Sophia Ginis, Metro Transit
Lidiya Girma, Ramsey County
Diana Guglielmetti, Target Corp
Simone Hardeman-Jones, GreenLight Fund Twin Cities
Cierra Hardin, NuAxis Innovation
Lauren Hunter, UnitedHealth Group
Menaka Mohan, NEOO Partners
James Nagbe, Genesys Works Twin Cities
Samuel N. Ndely II, The Minneapolis Foundation
Amanda Novak, YMCA of the North
Courtney S. Ries, Meet Minneapolis
Khalique Rogers, Good Riddance LLC
Libby Starling, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
Michelle Tran Maryns, We Sparkle Co.
Chao Yang, Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging/Minnesota Management and Budget

2023 – Rochester Cohort
Courtney Bergey Swanson, Community and Economic Development Associates
Lida Casper, Rochester Public Schools
Lauren Jensen, City of Rochester
Karen Martinez, Education Minnesota
Grace Pesch, United Way of Olmsted County
Julie Ruzek, Cradle 2 Career
Meaghan Sherden, Olmsted County Public Health Services
Kim Kevin Sin, University of Minnesota Rochester / The Village Agricultural Cooperative

2023 – St. Cloud Cohort
Shirwa Adan, Central Minnesota Community Empowerment Organization
Nicole Bukowski, Rinke Noonan Attorneys at Law
Njeri Clement, St. Cloud Technical and Community College
Abdi Daisane, Blooming Kids Child Care Center
Ekram Elmoge, United Way of Central MN
Cassandra Miles, Great River Children’s Museum
Bruce Powlish, Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union
John Waletzko, Bradbury Stamm Construction
About the Program

The Young American Leaders Program originated at Harvard Business School in 2015 with the aim of bringing city-based cohorts of rising leaders from business, government, and non-profit organizations together for three days to increase their knowledge of the state and trajectory of our national and regional economic development, provide tools for cross-sector collaboration, and grow networks of rising leaders who can lead together for public good in the future. In 2019, the Itasca Project partnered with the University of Minnesota’s Center for Integrative Leadership as well as Harvard Business School to hold the first Minnesota Young American Leaders Program at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

For 2023, broad-based regional selection committees led by local partners and the Itasca Project considered applications from a wide range of rising leaders from across business, government, and non-profit organizations. Successful applicants were chosen based on their track record and potential trajectory in both their professional and civic engagement and were invited to attend.

Thank you to our regional selection committee partners:

- Northeast MN - Duluth: Northland Foundation
- Fargo - Moorhead: Downtown Moorhead, Inc.
- Mankato: Greater Mankato Growth
- Minneapolis - Saint Paul: Itasca Project
- Rochester: Destination Medical Center
- Saint Cloud: Greater Saint Cloud Development Corporation

The 2023 Minnesota Young American Leaders Program is scheduled for May 22-24, 2023, at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.