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## The Columbus Partnership Invests in Local African American Leadership Development

The Columbus Partnership has funded an expansion of the African American leadership Academy (AALA) for their 2022 program year. This generous investment enables the Academy to add a second cohort of fellows for the upcoming program year, with a specific focus on adding additional Fellows from the nonprofit, government, and small business sectors. The 2022 class will include 40 African American leaders from a wide range of industries who excel in their professions and engage in community service in central Ohio. These fellows will be welcomed to the 2022 program at a kick off reception later this week.

The Academy's mission is to increase the number and effectiveness of central Ohio's African American leaders and broaden awareness of this pool of capable and civic-minded professionals. The Academy accomplishes this by offering a strengths-based curriculum focused on efficacy, leadership agility, and leadership interaction. Academy Alumni Fellows include community notables such as Janelle Coleman, Judge Laurel Beatty Blunt, Bo Chilton, Mark Hatcher, and Dawn Tyler Lee.

AALA is managed by co-executive directors Donna James and Mo Wright, who are supported by a highly accomplished and committed Advisory Board of African American leaders chaired by attorney Yvette McGee Brown. On receiving the grant from the Columbus Partnership, Donna James remarked, "We appreciate the Columbus Partnership's shared stewardship and support of Black leadership development across our community. We look forward to our continued public/private partnerships."

Now in its 18th program year, AALA has graduated over 260 Fellows. The Academy is supported annually through its dedicated sponsors including Battelle, Nationwide, Fifth Third, Denison University, and the United Way of Central Ohio, among others. These local sponsors make it possible for all fellows to complete this program at no direct cost to them.

"Having the Columbus Partnership invest in the development of talented African American leaders is critical to maintaining a diverse community where everyone thrives," said Mo Wright, Co-Executive Director. "These funds increase our capacity to serve more leaders who seek evidence-based and culturally relevant leadership development without the limitations of personal costs or investment from their employers, which is often lacking for many professionals of color."

AALA envisions a community that enlarges the definition of success and redefines leadership for African Americans to include doing well professionally while doing more good in our community.

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For more information on the academy visit [www.aalacademy.org](http://www.aalacademy.org)