

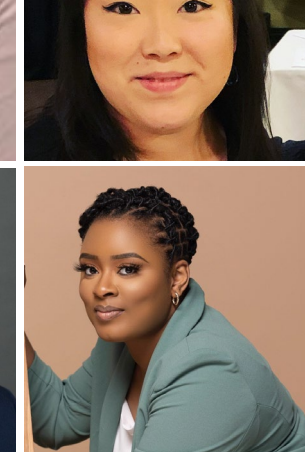
Neighborhood Leadership Fellows



The “I’s” Build the “We”
Dwayne T. James, PE, EdD
NCCEA Conference | October 7, 2025



The We of NLF



What is Neighborhood Leadership Fellows?



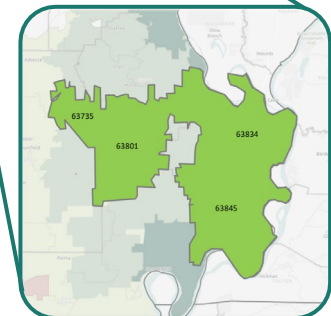
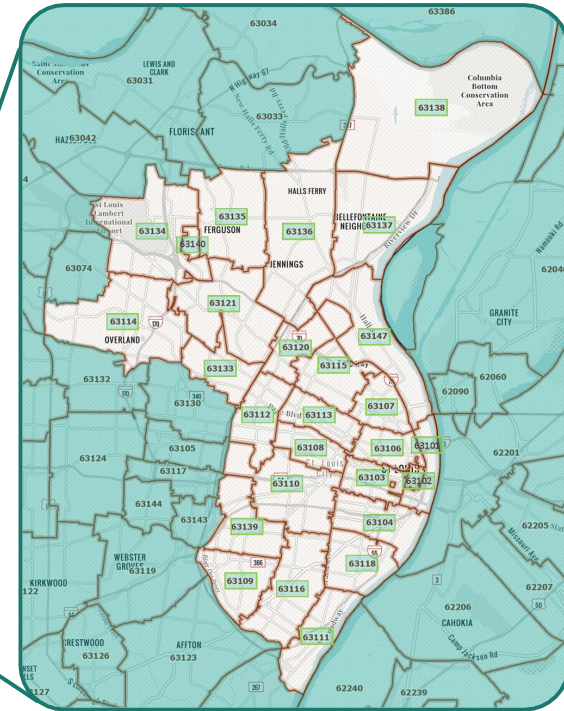
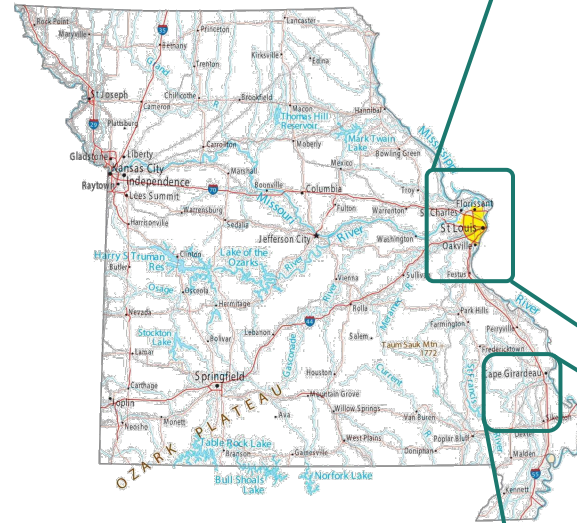
Place-based
leadership development



Focused on previously
disinvested neighborhoods



Equips residents to lead
sustainable changes



Inviting: Start with Belonging

- Recruitment
 - Personal & mass distribution
- Barrier Removals
 - Application process
 - Grant funded
 - Stipends
- Welcoming Culture



Informed: Relevant/Research-Based

- Policy Advocacy
 - Systems thinking
 - Power in networks
- Data-driven decision-making
- Personal Leadership Plans
 - Strengths-based approach



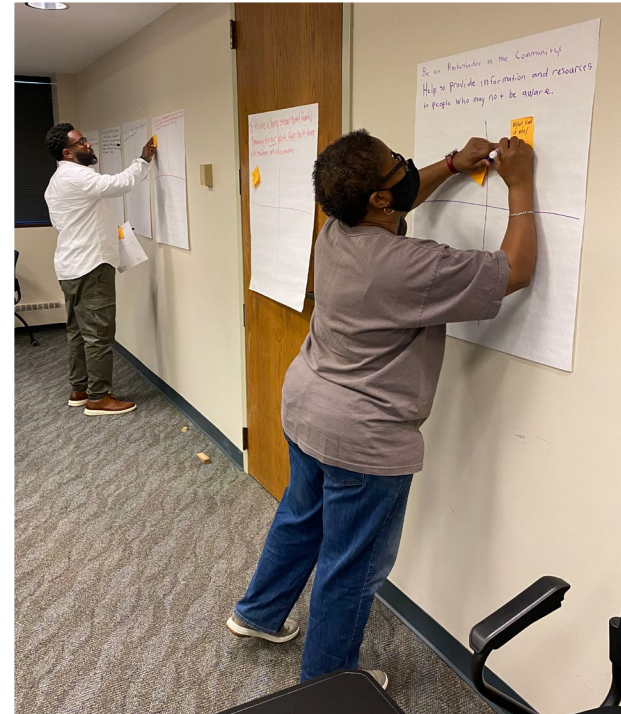
Innovative: Reimagined Programming

- Curriculum blends
 - Asset-based approach
 - Interactive & multimodal
 - Transferable leadership tools
 - Individual and group work
- Cross-Sector Collaboration



Intentional: People-Centered

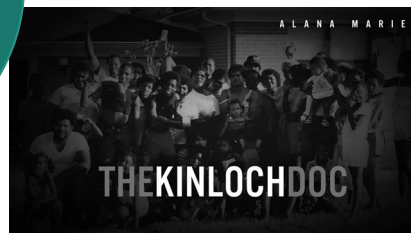
- Session Discussions shaped by ...
 - Community priorities
 - Collaborative voices
 - Cohort goals and challenges
- Lived experience is valued
- Tailored mentorship



Impactful: Lasting Leadership

- Continued Improvement
 - Session evaluations
 - End of program evaluations
- Alumni
 - Speakers & co-facilitators
 - Alumni action group
 - Continued mentoring
- Ripple Mapping
 - Decision making boards
 - Elected office
 - Collaborations
 - Editorials





Resident of 'forgotten neighborhood' in St. Louis organizes in hopes of having more clout

Jesse Rogan Sep 2, 2020

Two Fellows served on COVID-19 St. Louis County Community Development, Non-profit & Alternative Lending Team

Fellow wrote an op-ed about naming of Homer G Phillips Clinic

Fellow wrote an op-ed about Police excessive use of force that was published on CNN.com

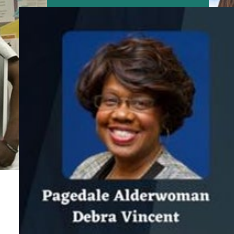
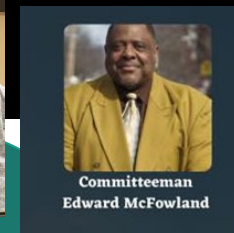
"I feel empowered to address and speak on my personal experiences in a concrete, factual, passionate, and informed manner. I feel ready to take real action against injustices based on the speakers, readings and podcasts." -Mary, NLF 2018

Addressing Regional Issues

A seat at a decision-making table

Increased Civic Engagement

Leadership Collaboration



I've never been this excited to vote next week. Honestly, if it were not for NLF I wouldn't be voting.



"I would have never considered applying for a board if it wasn't for NLF. I would recommend this program to anyone who is serious about improving their community."



Call to Action: The I's Build The We ...

- **Inviting** → Welcoming
- **Informed** → Relevant
- **Innovative** → New Opportunities
- **Intentional** → Purpose-Driven
- **Impactful** → Meaningful Change



thank you

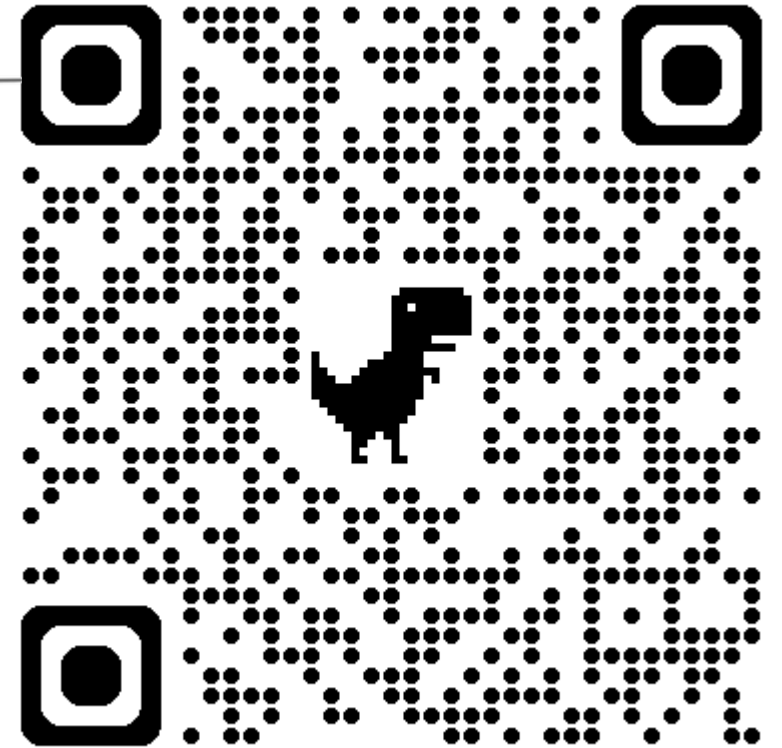
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Link to LinkedIn Profile