



**CDCLP**  
**Leadership  
Program**

**2024- 2025**

# CDCLP ANNUAL REPORT

**PREPARED BY :**

The Community Development Corporation  
Leadership Program

**A PROGRAM OF:**



**Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation**



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# YEAR IN REVIEW

**CDCLP** is our City's only leadership capacity building program specifically designed for **Community Development Corporation leaders** and those who collaborate and work closely with CDC's.

## Recruitment to Graduation

-  36 CDCLP Cohort IV applications received.
-  36 CDCLP Cohort IV interviews held
-  21 CDCLP Cohort IV graduates.



### ATTENDANCE

CDCLP Cohort IV is the first cohort to have a **100%** perfect attendance rate.



### REPRESENTATION

- **11** Cleveland CDCs
- **3** First Ring Suburban CDCs
- **1** City Staff Member
- **1** Partnering Non-Profit

2024-2025: **14 CDCLP sessions** over 10 months, each lead by a content expert(s).



### GRANT MAKING

**FOUR** CDCs were awarded a \$50,000 grant; totaling **\$200,000** in grant funds from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation directly to the CDCs and the neighborhoods they serve. Because of the investment from the Mandel Foundation, quite often the receipt of these grant funds aid the security of additional funding sources and thus increases neighborhood & community development City-wide.

# COHORT IV GRADUATES

*"Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others."  
-Jack Welch*

1. Jameesha Alexander - Neighborhood Sustainability Officer - NuPoint
2. Ian Andrews - Executive Director - LakewoodAlive
3. Laurice Kennedy Brown - Director of Community Engagement - NuPoint
4. Alex Cala - Special Projects Manager - MidTown Cleveland
5. Rachel Castle - Secretary, Board of Directors - Euclid Community Development Corp.
6. Adam Gifford - Director of Community Involvement - Metro West
7. Julia Mettler-Grove - Planning & Development Associate - Ohio City Inc.
8. Jimmie Hicks, Jr. - Executive Director - Start Right
9. Naomi Jia - Director of AsiaTown Initiatives - MidTown Cleveland
10. Joy Johnson - Executive Director - Burten, Bell Carr
11. Charles Kennick - Director of Neighborhood Development - Old Brooklyn
12. Beth Madden - Director of Marketing - Northwest Neighborhoods
13. Claire Maurer - Special Projects Manager - Neighborhood Leadership Development Program
14. Donald McGee - Executive Director - Miles Heights
15. Brett Parsons - Community Engagement Manager - City of Cleveland
16. Matt Provolt - Associate Director of Planning & Design - University Circle Inc.
17. Isaac Robb - Vice President of Planning & Urban Projects - Western Reserve Land Cons.
18. Shauna Sanders - Executive Director - Slavic Village
19. Joevrose Small - Assistant Director of Economic Development - City of Cleveland
20. Allison Woods - Neighborhood Development Manager - West Park Kamms
21. Feiran Yang - Community Organizer, AsiaTown - MidTown Cleveland

Hosting leaders in executive level positions to coordinator level positions and all coming from a mix of Cleveland CDCs, suburban CDCs, board members, City staff members and a Non-Profit Organization, Cohort IV was the most diverse yet.



# **THE THREE “C”S: CURRICULUM, COACHING, COHORT GRADUATE SUPPORT**

## **1) CDCLP Curriculum Schedule**

CDCLP offers fifteen sessions over the course of ten months, August through June. All sessions are on Thursdays from 8:30am-5pm. The Cohort Launch is held prior to the first session and provides an opportunity for participants to meet and learn about each other.

### **CDCLP Cohort Launch**

**Session 1:** CDCLP Orientation

**Session 2:** Leading CDCs: Management vs. Leadership

**Session 3:** Who You Are is How You Lead

**Session 4:** Group Processes and Development

**Session 5:** Leading with an Equity Lens/Creating an Equitable Community

**Session 6:** Creating the Best CDC Team

**Session 7:** Raising Funds for your CDC - Preparation, Sources and Post-Grant Relationships

**Session 8:** Organizational Planning

**Session 9:** Governing CDCs: Building Better Boards

**Session 10:** Neighborhood Planning and Real Estate Development

**Session 11:** Managing the Finances of a CDC

**Session 12:** Neighborhood Marketing, Communication and Advocacy for Change

**Session 13:** Self-Care as a Leadership Strategy and Quality HR

**Session 14:** Rallying Your Neighborhood for Change

**Session 15:** Sustaining the Community Movement

## 2) Coaching

In addition to the skills-based leadership curriculum programming, CDCLP offers all participants and graduates coaching from knowledgeable professionals in Cleveland. The program coaches are committed to every participant and graduate’s growth as a leader in the CDC industry, at no financial cost to the participant or graduate. This is an invaluable piece of CDCLP that is not mirrored in any other leadership program in the City.

	<p><b>MIKE WALTON</b> Lead Program Coach; Food Depot to Health</p>		<p><b>AYONNA BLUE DONALD</b> Program Coach; Enterprise Community Partners</p>
	<p><b>DAVID FITZ</b> Lead Program Coach; Strategy Design Partners</p>		<p><b>MERLE GORDON</b> Program Coach; The Wilbert Group</p>
	<p><b>NATALIE LEEK</b> Program Coach; Providence House</p>		<p><b>TOM MCNAIR</b> Program Coach; City of Cleveland</p>
	<p><b>BRIDGET KENT MARQUEZ</b> Program Coach; Northwest Neighborhoods</p>		<p><b>ADAM STALDER</b> Program Coach; Cuyahoga County Land Bank</p>

### 3) Graduate Engagement

Molly Crawford joined our CDCLP team this Spring as CDCLP's Graduate Support Manager. CDCLP has currently graduated 74 participants and with our fifth Cohort year upon us, we will continue to expand. Armed with a wealth of Community Development knowledge based on over five years of a career with two Cleveland CDCs, Molly is also a CDCLP Graduate from Cohort III.



#### What is the purpose of a CDCLP Graduate Support Manager?

- Ongoing engagement and communication with our array of CDCLP graduates.
  - Mindful planning and execution of future graduate capacity sessions and events.
  - Creation and implementation of our first CDCLP Facebook page...
- ...and so much more!

*“Creating a space where CDC professionals can convene, share knowledge, and learn from one another is invaluable to the success of the industry as a whole, and CDCLP is that space. In my role as Graduate Support Manager, I want to build and expand the support and resources offered to current and future graduates of CDCLP, as well as help connect and build relationships amongst graduates that allow for better collaboration and learning between CDCs.”*

## **4) Graduate Highlight: Executive Directors**

Currently there are nine Community Development Corporation Executive Directors who are graduates of CDCLP. While some of these graduates were at the Executive Director level when they applied for and participated in CDCLP, several grew into this expanded leadership role after their specific cohort graduation.

As Executive Directors, these leaders are encountering things in their roles that only Executive Directors experience. Recognizing this in the summer of 2024 we elected to host breakfast meetings, three times annually, with these leaders. The meetings allow for the Executive Directors to share ideas and experiences, to seek advice, to learn from one another and to cultivate relationships in a safe setting.

### **These Executive Director Breakfasts have resulted in:**

- 1** Provided a Human Resources Management session exclusively for Executive Directors in July 2025.
- 2** Supported a Trauma Informed Leadership Training at three Community Development Corporations whose Executive Directors are graduates - at no cost to the CDC.
- 3** Established a secure text message platform, solely for these Executive Directors, to privately seek advice and share learning with their colleagues.



# CDCLP - GRADUATE ENGAGEMENT

**This year CDCLP engaged with graduates in three very different but very effective ways.**



## **ANNUAL GRADUATE GATHERING**

We kicked off 2025 with our first ever CDCLP Graduate Gathering. Hosted at Collision Bend Brewing Company in Cleveland's Flats neighborhood, all four CDCLP cohorts represented in this social get together, and over 70% of the CDCLP graduates were in attendance. Camaraderie amongst peers is just as critical as formal learning sessions, and the positive response from this first-ever event is a true testimony to the importance of relationship building that CDCLP provides..



## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CAPACITY SESSION**

Because of an overarching request from the CDCLP Executive Director graduates, this summer we held a Graduate Capacity Session solely for Executive Directors on the topic of Human Resources. While the CDCLP curriculum does cover Human Resource Management, the circumstances of today's climate led to a request to have a session designed to address some of the current HR topics CDC leadership is facing. Facilitated by one of our CDCLP Program Coach and Faculty Members Natalie Leek, this special session was certainly a success.



## **NEW SESSION TOPIC**

Cohort IV of CDCLP saw a new session - Real Estate Development. Now incorporated as a standing session within the CDCLP curriculum it was critical for this session to be offered to our first three CDCLP cohorts who did not receive this same privilege. Therefore our 2025 Graduate Capacity Session was Neighborhood and Real Estate Planning & Development. Taught by some of the best CDC leaders on the topic, graduates gave this session a 100% session effectiveness evaluation.

# 2024-2025 GRANT RECIPIENT AWARDS

**We are so excited to share that for the second year in a row, four CDCs were each awarded a \$50,000 grant.**

A grand total of \$200,000 was awarded to four different Community Development Corporations, each very different but equally impactful to their neighborhoods of service.

<b>CDC Recipient</b>	<b>Activity / Project</b>	<b>Goals</b>
Lakewood Alive	To expand upon their Strengthening Our Seniors (SOS) program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase neighborhood investment and development.</li><li>• Inject a community voice representative of today’s neighborhood residents.</li></ul>
Metro West	To support their first Community Arts Festival & Celebration of the Development around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a plan that addresses the current needs of the neighborhood.</li><li>• Establish long-term funding &amp; professional development strategies for the organization.</li></ul>
NuPoint	To develop upon neighborhood branding following the merger of two former CDCs for their service area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have a master plan that more accurately represents the Slavic Village community present-day.</li><li>• Create a CDC driven grantmaking approach to better meet the requests and needs of residents.</li></ul>
St. Clair Superior	To pilot a storefront renovation program for main street business owners on St. Clair Avenue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase community engagement with an accessible community room for all.</li><li>• Enhance office productivity and community service.</li></ul>

# NEXT STEPS

## Where are we heading this year?

CDCLP Cohort V will kick off this year with its Launch on Tuesday, August 26th, 2025. With a grand total of twenty-two cohort participants we are incredibly excited to get things started!



### 1 CDCLP COHORT V

Successfully launch our now 15-session, ten-month Community Development Leadership Program in its fifth cohort year

### 2 CDCLP GRANTS

Continue to award and administer four additional \$50,000 grant awards directly impacting the neighborhoods/residents.

### 3 CDCLP GRADUATE SUPPORT

Provide two CDCLP graduate interface opportunities - one social and one that continues to build upon leadership and capacity building.

### 4 CDCLP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Continue to meet three times annually with all CDCLP Executive Director graduates, hold further capacity opportunities, and support camaraderie.

# WORDS FROM GRADUATES



**IAN ANDREWS, LAKEWOODALIVE**

“While it was an honor to be asked to apply for, and admitted to, CDCLP, the true honor was being the recipient of such a thoughtful approach to leadership development in a sector many don’t understand despite many benefitting from our collective work. I found myself drawing upon CDCLP courses almost immediately to better lead our organization, and the impact is palpable. We all strive to fill gaps every day in our communities and CDCLP provided the resources to fill leadership and knowledge gaps to better lead our organizations and support our neighbors.”

**JOY JOHNSON, BURTEN, BELL CARR**

“CDCLP was the first leadership training I’ve experienced that was specific to the needs and challenges of a Cleveland-based Community Development Corporation. The training was timely for me as we were refocusing our efforts as a CDC. Additionally, I built a network of current and future CDC leaders that has lasted beyond our cohort sessions.”



**ALLISON WOODS, WEST PARK KAMM’S**

“Looking back on my experience with CDCLP, I can confidently say it was one of the most valuable professional development opportunities I’ve had. One of my greatest takeaways was the ability to build meaningful connections with my fellow cohort members. Overall, CDCLP not only enhanced my leadership skills but also expanded my professional network, strengthened my confidence, and gave me tools that will continue to benefit my individual development, my organization and hopefully, the broader community.”



*We believe that thriving neighborhoods are the result of the strength and dedication of its leaders. CDCs are the conduit for helping to create quality neighborhoods that go on to become neighborhoods of choice. A strong Community Development Corporation is the bedrock upon which neighborhood transformation rests. Through the Mandel Foundation’s investment in enhancing the leadership capacity of CDC’s, more neighborhoods will prosper.*