

36 Indiana Youth Workers of Color Join Second Emerging Leaders Cohort

Fellowship helps participants build existing leadership skills and community networks needed to lead and grow effective youth-serving organizations

November 19, 2024 (INDIANAPOLIS, IND.) – Thirty-six exceptional youth workers of color from across the state have been chosen for the second Emerging Leaders of Color Fellowship cohort launching in January 2025 as part of the Indiana Youth Worker Well-Being Project.

Participants will engage in an intensive six-month training and development series designed to enhance leadership capabilities and provide opportunities to cultivate robust community networks. Monthly sessions cover topics like equity-driven leadership, navigating crucial conversations, community building, and sustainability and strategic direction from a diverse team of highly qualified facilitators and speakers, equipping the cohort to lead and grow thriving youth-serving organizations.

The following individuals were selected to join the Emerging Leaders of Color Fellowship through a competitive application process that considered their aspirations or current leadership in a youth-serving organization as well as commitment to a career in youth services:

- Brittany Adkins, Edna Martin Christian Center – Indianapolis
- Mimi Ahiakwo, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Indiana – Fort Wayne
- Bryce Akridge, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana – Indianapolis
- Ronnie Beathea, Eclectic Soul VOICES Corporation – Indianapolis
- Bobbi Boutte, YMCA of Greater Indianapolis – Indianapolis
- Joseph Castillo, Extended School Enrichment – Pendleton
- Komal Chohan, Umeed Hope – Indianapolis
- Gabriel Clark, MLK Center Indy – Indianapolis
- Paula Eve Davis, Good Samaritan Project – Lafayette
- Ashlyn Douthitt, Reach for Youth – Indianapolis
- Ronnell DuBose, Purdue University Northwest – Griffith
- Finda Fallah, Communities in Schools of Indiana – Indianapolis
- Nancy Garduño, La Plaza – Indianapolis
- Cynthia Grant, Laporte County Juvenile Services Center – Michigan City
- Diana Greeno, YWCA of Greater Lafayette – Frankfort
- Jasmine Harvey, Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation – Fort Wayne
- Devon Holifield, Martin University – Indianapolis
- Kiana Jackson, Youth Services Bureau of St. Joseph County – South Bend
- Laresha Johnson, 14th and Chestnut Community Center – Terre Haute
- Katrina Jones, Foster Success – Indianapolis
- Priscilla Jones, Middle Way House – Bloomington
- Raydia Martin, Flourish Community Hub – Munster
- Dominique Morefield, Girl Coalition of Indiana – Terre Haute
- Wendell Mosby, Real Men Color – Merrillville
- Christy Nunley, Child Advocates – Indianapolis
- Kenya Patterson, Do Over Project/Living Wellness Respite Retreat – Indianapolis
- Tolvi Patterson, GEO Academies – Indianapolis
- Emily Perez, Indiana Youth Group – Indianapolis
- Gladys Rosas, La Casa de Amistad – Goshen

- Jamarra Smith, Pathway Counseling & Consulting – Indianapolis
- Lannie Terry, The Gurl Code – Indianapolis
- Oscar Tipton, Foundation for Youth – Columbus
- Aleesha Thirkles-Williams, Ivy Tech Community College – Gary
- Autumn Trice-Johnson, Brightpoint – Fort Wayne
- Robert Walls, Winning Experiences – Indianapolis
- Lolita Wilson, Coates – Hammond

Through the Emerging Leaders of Color Fellowship, the Youth Worker Well-Being Project aims to tackle the need for leadership diversity in Indiana's youth-serving sector by investing in youth workers of color's skillsets and foster more inclusive youth organizations statewide. A third round of applications for the Emerging Leaders of Color Fellowship will launch in February 2025. Sign up for IYI's Weekly Update at iyi.org/newsletters to stay up to date on future cohort application dates.

Interested Indiana youth workers and youth-serving organizations can also learn more about the next round of fellowship applications and other project initiatives at youthworkerwellbeing.org.

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About Indiana Youth Worker Well-Being Project

The Youth Worker Well-Being Project is a collaborative statewide effort to address individual youth worker well-being, workplace conditions, and root causes of stress in the sector with the goal to promote meaningful change in youth workers and invest in their well-being so they can provide the highest-quality services for Indiana youth. Other programs include telemedicine and virtual mental health services, Peer Support Groups, and the Emerging Leaders of Color Fellowship. The project is a collaboration between Indiana Afterschool Network (IAN), IARCA Institute for Excellence (IARCA), Indiana Youth Services Association (IYSA), Indiana Youth Institute (IYI), and Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY). Funding for the Indiana Youth Worker Well-Being Project is made possible through a \$20 million Lilly Endowment Inc. grant to Indiana Youth Institute. Learn more at youthworkerwellbeing.org.

Indiana Afterschool Network

IAN advances opportunities for learning beyond the school day so that all Indiana youth can grow into healthy, thriving adults. Its vision is to help every young person in Indiana have access to quality out-of-school programs provided by valued professionals. IAN has developed a research-based system of continuous quality improvement to help programs better meet the needs of youth through afterschool standards, professional development, self-assessment, and coaching. IAN works with communities across the state to increase access to high-quality out-of-school time programs.

IARCA Institute for Excellence

The IARCA Institute provides training, practice advancement support, and transparency to Indiana's child and family welfare community. Founded in 2000, the Institute supports a culture of ongoing practice and system improvement so that Hoosier children, youth, and families have access to the quality services they need and deserve.

Indiana Youth Services Association

IYSA is a membership organization that supports 30 Youth Service Bureaus, serving youth in 70 counties in Indiana to fulfill the four core roles of prevention programming, advocacy, community education, and information & referral. IYSA leads many statewide initiatives including an anti-human

trafficking program, youth worker renewal fellowships, youth work competency trainings and certification, public awareness campaigns regarding medical amnesty, and Indiana ACEs Coalition.

Indiana Youth Institute

Since 1988, IYI has worked to improve the lives of all Indiana children by strengthening and connecting the people, organizations, and communities that are focused on kids and youth. IYI provides critical data, capacity-building resources, and innovative training for over 2,500 diverse youth-serving organizations and 17,000 youth workers each year. IYI has a long history of actively listening to Indiana's youth workers and community leaders, leveraging their feedback to facilitate collaboration and promote problem-solving and collective advocacy on a statewide scale. IYI is serving as the administrative lead for this project, employing dedicated staff and providing supportive services.

Marion County Commission on Youth

As Gateway, Connector, Advocate, Capacity Builder and catalyst for Youth Engagement, MCCOY strengthens and supports the thousands of individuals, hundreds of organizations, and scores of systems in Marion County that serve our youth. MCCOY's goal is to ensure that every young person has equitable access to the supports, programs, and services needed to grow, learn, and thrive into successful adulthood.