

For Immediate Release

Contact: Penny Benavidez, (210) 381-1025, pbenavidez@wsalamo.org

Inaugural Workforce Leadership Academy Class Announced by Workforce Solutions Alamo in Partnership with the Aspen Institute

24 Local Leaders Selected to Participate, Collaborate to Strengthen Career Pathway Strategies

April 25, 2023, San Antonio, Texas – Workforce Solutions Alamo introduced the inaugural class of a new program designed to improve local economic mobility and workforce development efforts, presenting innovative solutions to the challenges faced by workers and businesses.

The Alamo Region Workforce Leadership Academy, a yearlong fellowship developed through a partnership with the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program, engages nonprofit, government, academic, and business leaders in a series of retreats and workshops as they work together to advance an innovative and equitable workforce ecosystem.

The Workforce Leadership Academy is the first in the Alamo Region, and one of six to be launched this year through the support of Walmart, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, local funder, local funder. This Academy is the latest in a series of several [Workforce Leadership Academies](#) hosted in communities across the United States and Canada.

The Academy launched on March 29th, 2023, and will culminate with a collaborative capstone project presentation in December.

The 24 fellows of the Alamo Region Workforce Leadership Academy Class of 2023-24 are:

- Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, District 4 Councilwoman, San Antonio City Council
- Angelica Cervantes, LCSW-S, Chief Operating Officer, YWCA-SA
- Ashley Geyer, Director of Employee Engagement, Guido Companies
- Caroline Goddard, Strategic Community Partnership Manager/Equal Opportunity Officer, Workforce Solutions Alamo
- Christopher Mammen, Vice President of Workforce Development, greater:SATX
- Deborah Carter, Economic Development Director, Bexar County - Economic & Community Development
- Deborah Siller-Cruz, Executive Director, Each One Teach One
- Janie Martinez Gonzalez, CEO and Digital Engineer, Webhead
- Kat Lallo, Business Retention and Expansion Manager, Converse Economic Development Corporation
- Kelli G. Rhodes, President & CEO, Restore Education
- Lakeshia Bragg, Systems Director, Dual Generation Initiative, United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County
- Lorena Gonzalez, Special Education Director, North East ISD
- Manuel Ugues, Regional Director, Serco of Texas, Inc.
- Mike Crowley, Director, Workforce and Industry Development, New Braunfels EDC
- Natasha Richardson, Strategic Partnership Manager, Communities In Schools
- Richard Davidson, Chief Operating Officer, Family Service Association of San Antonio, Inc.
- Robert H. Reyna, MBA, Community Development Director, Bexar County - Community & Housing
- Robert Spencer, Owner, Express Employment Professionals
- Sandra Torres Richardson, President, Strategic Links
- Sonia Sandoval, Program Analyst II, Bexar County Community Supervision & Corrections Dept.

- MORE -

- Steve Dane, Director, Income & Skills Development, Haven for Hope of Bexar County
- Tiffany Walker, Vice President of Services, San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind
- Virginia "Nina" Villalta, Senior Management Analyst, City of San Antonio - Department of Human Services
- Yousef Kassim, CEO, Easy Expunctions

“Workforce Solutions Alamo is honored to partner with the Aspen Institute to lead this unique cohort designed to elicit meaningful change for our community,” said Adrian Lopez, CEO of Workforce Solutions Alamo. “With enhanced local collaboration we will disaggregate local-level data to identify system gaps and opportunities to better serve residents, employers, and the local economies. Throughout the course of the fellowship, Academy Fellows representing economic development, community-based organizations, local government, youth, and private industry will explore best practices across the country to strengthen our local workforce ecosystem across our 13-County Alamo Region.”

“Collaboration grows at the speed of trust, and today’s workforce development leaders are increasingly being asked to devise solutions through collaboration,” said Sheila Maguire, senior fellow at the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program. “This Academy is a rare opportunity for these local leaders to step back with colleagues from the Alamo Region, reflect on their own organizational challenges, hear from leading practitioners from around the country, and develop the network and trust so essential for success.”

The Alamo Region Workforce Leadership Academy is led by Katherine Pipoly, Workforce Solutions Alamo Chief Operating Officer, and an Advisory Board that includes Ana DeHoyos O'Connor, Angela White, Benjamin T. Reed, Cara Magrane, Dawn Dixon, Dr. Briana Hagelgans, Elizabeth Ackley, Elizabeth Lutz, General Juan G. Ayala, Jennifer Cook, Jesse Hamilton, Jonathan Packer, Juan Antonio Flores, Kenyatta Lovett, Kim Jefferies, Kim Vinton, City of San Antonio Councilman Manny Pelaez, Rebecca Flores, State Representative Barbara Gervin-Hawkins, and Johnny Vahalik.

More information about the Alamo Region Workforce Leadership Academy is available on our website, www.workforcesolutionsalamo.org/aspen-institute.

###

© 2022 by the Aspen Institute’s Workforce Leadership Network. We are pleased to make this work available under a Creative Commons license, [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).