



CONTACT

Lindsey Faulk
Executive Director, Leadership Institute of Acadiana
337-408-3662 or lindsey@leadacadiana.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Leadership Institute of Acadiana Announces 39th Leadership Lafayette Cohort Join LIA for its Annual Meeting to celebrate the new class and look back on 2025

LAFAYETTE, LA – January 20, 2026 – The Leadership Institute of Acadiana (LIA) has announced its Leadership Lafayette cohort for 2026, culminating in its 39th year of the program. This group of rising and established leaders were selected from unique backgrounds in the business, civic, education and non-profit sectors. These individuals will be supported on their leadership journey by two Program Co-Chairs: Billy Hobbs, CEO of BWPR (Class XXXVII) and Dianne Trim, Founder of Trimline Strategies (Class XXXVIII).

The 2026 class of Leadership Lafayette, Class XXXIX, consists of 27 individuals that are seeking to better the Lafayette community and beyond.

This year's cohort includes:

Stacey Bello – FlyGuys, Inc.

Sydney Bianchini – Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana

Landon Boudreaux – SLEMCO

Sarah Brasseaux – Imperian

Cassidy Broussard – CGI

Ali Chapman – Thoughtful Growth Marketing

Nicolette M. Darjean – CGI

JaWand E. Edwards-Morris – JaWand Morris Coaching

Taylor Elliott – Basin Arts

Jason Emert – Jones Walker LLP

Jared Eubanks – United Vision Logistics

Ryan Farnell – Dupre Logistics LLC

Shelly Fontenot – St. Landry Bank & Trust Company

Rachael Hood – Moloco

JoElle Judice – Downtown Lafayette Unlimited

Hannah Lafleur – Ochsner Lafayette General

Jacob Landry – Unitech Training Academy

Katelyn LeBlanc – JD Bank

Timothy Miguez – Wayground

Stacy Mistic – Hospice of Acadiana

Melissa Penny – Acadiana Center for the Arts

Sharioka Phills – SCP Health

Taylor Robinson – Acadiana Legal Service Corporation

Lacey Simon – BioMarin Pharmaceutical

Taylor Wallace – Dr. Raphael A. Baranco Elementary School

Kristi Waltrip – Unitech Training Academy

Kristen Wesley – Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana

Leadership Lafayette, established in 1987, is dedicated to equipping participants with the skills and knowledge required to excel in leadership roles throughout the community and beyond. The program serves as a platform for developing a thorough understanding of the challenges, successes, and opportunities that continue to shape the region. By exposing the cohort to differing leadership styles, civic engagement opportunities, and access to community leaders, graduates will walk away knowing much more about the community than when they started.

“Leadership Lafayette continues to serve as a powerful space for leaders to gain perspective and grow alongside peers who are equally committed to the future of Acadiana,” said Lindsey Faulk, Executive Director of the Leadership Institute of Acadiana. “Through the program, participants deepen their understanding of the forces shaping our region, build fresh perspectives and strong relationships, and develop a greater sense of responsibility to lead with intention and long-term impact.”

The program curriculum of Leadership Lafayette addresses vital topics including education, local and state government, economic development, arts and culture, and community needs. Graduates emerge from the program equipped with firsthand insights into the region's challenges and the potential for meaningful civic involvement.

LIA also invites those interested to its **Annual Meeting on Tuesday, February 10th at City Club at River Ranch**, where Class XXXIX will be highlighted and 2025 organizational accomplishments will be celebrated. Registration is available at leadacadiana.org. Individual tickets or tables of 8 are available for purchase.

About Leadership Institute of Acadiana:

LIA is a non-profit dedicated to the mission of convening, building, and activating leaders. Founded as an executive leadership program to provide civic and professional leaders with an in-depth view of their community, LIA is continuously evaluating new opportunities to improve the leadership capacity throughout Acadiana.

For more information, contact Lindsey Faulk at 337-408-3662 or lindsey@leadacadiana.org.

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