



YEAR-END WOMEN OF COLOR LEADSTRONG FELLOWSHIP REPORT

WE FOSTER A POWERFUL, EQUITY-DRIVEN SOCIAL SECTOR
BY STRENGTHENING LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

MISSION:

LeaderSpring is dedicated to **fostering a powerful, equity-driven social sector by strengthening leaders and their organizations; developing communities of leaders; and transforming the systems in which they work.** Grounded in our mission, we strive to fortify leaders and their organizations, contributing to a more equitable society.



LEADERSPRING'S 26-YEAR INNOVATIVE COHORT-BASED PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING COMMUNITIES HAS POWERED OVER **500 LEADERS IN THE BAY AREA**, FOSTERING TANGIBLE AND MEANINGFUL CHANGE WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SECTORS. THE ESSENCE OF OUR WORK LIES IN THE PROFOUND IMPACT CREATED BY OUR LEADERS WHO EMBODY OUR COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL AND RACIAL JUSTICE.

“WOMEN OF COLOR LEADSTRONG IS A CLARION CALL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE LEADERSHIP BRILLIANCE AND POWER OF WOC WHO ARE UNSATISFIED AND RESISTING THE HARM INDUCING STATUS QUO IMPACTING PEOPLE OF COLOR, COMMUNITIES OF LOW INCOME, AND OTHER COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING OPPRESSIVE STATUS. LEADSTRONG IS A CONTAINER THAT INVITES A CRITICAL STARE; AT INTERNALIZED AND EXTERNAL OPPRESSIVE SYSTEMS, IDEOLOGIES, AND NORMS, AND A HOPEFUL STANCE TOWARD LIBERATORY AND HEALING WAYS OF BEING, BRIDGING, AND BUILDING TOGETHER

Safi Jiroh, Co-Executive Director

“LeadStrong is a vision that manifests what investing in women of color can produce. We witness a different type of power building between and among the participants that extends to their work, communities, and constituents. We are honored to support the development and engagement of our WOC LeadStrong participants.

Dr. Sonia Mañjon, Co-Executive Director

Meet our

ADVISORY COUNCIL



Steve is a working graphic designer, artist, and educator—whose work has been exhibited, locally, nationally, and internationally. His philosophy and approach to graphic design combines the personal with the formal.

Steve Jones
Plantain Studio

Noel is a businessman, philanthropist, and the founder of Next 10, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that educates and empowers Californians to improve the state's future. Next 10 is focused on innovation and the intersection between the economy and the environment.



Noel Perry
Next 10



Donna is a master executive coach, transformational leadership expert, facilitator, author, speaker, and media guest. For the past twenty-five years, Donna has guided several thousand Fortune 1000 and not-for-profit leaders, teams, and organizations unleash their power to thrive and create powerful results in their work and lives through her company, Positive Impact, LLC.

Donna Stoneham
Positive Impact

Bea served as Co-Chair of the Coalition from 2012-2015. Bea immigrated to the US at the age of fifteen. She has worked with community organizations, nonprofits, and local and state governments for over 30 years. An active retiree, she currently serves as co-chair to Shape Up SF as well as a Legislative Ambassador for the American Cancer Society.



Bea Cardenas-Duncan
Shape-Up SF

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Meet the cohorts!



WOC LEADSTRONG, CLASS OF 2021



WOC LEADSTRONG, CLASS OF 2022



WOC LEADSTRONG, CLASS OF 2023



AAW LEADSTRONG, CLASS OF 2024



NAANW LEADSTRONG, CLASS OF 2025

INVESTING IN THE LEADERSHIP OF

Women of Color



In 2019, in response to the urgent challenges confronted by women of color in the social sector, we initiated the Women of Color (WOC) LeadStrong Fellowship. The program prioritizes the lived experiences and well-being of women of color leaders and serves as a testament to address the distinctive challenges within the social sector. We interrogate these disparities from a systemic and equity-centered lens.



The WOC LeadStrong Fellowship fortifies the vision, voice, power, and leadership of women of color committed to social justice and racial equity. This fellowship offers a healing, generative, and rigorous space for learning and growth, embodying our commitment to foster transformative change in the social sector landscape.



Building on the success of the WOC LeadStrong Fellowship, we proudly introduced two identity-specific cohorts in 2023, which include the African American Women and Native American and Alaska Native Women LeadStrong cohorts. These cohorts represent an intentional effort to amplify the leadership of women of color and acknowledge and address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by African American, Native American, and Alaska Native women within the social sector. Through these focused initiatives, we aim to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for women of color, ensuring their voices are not only elevated but celebrated and powered in decision-making roles.

2023 LEADSTRONG

Cohorts



GRADUATING CLASS OF 2023

As **Women of Color LeadStrong Fellowship**, we have a deep understanding that there is no one “women of color” experience or identity. At LeaderSpring Center, we use the term as an organizing tool, to call forward our people in community. There is power, healing, and wisdom in the myriad of different experiences and intersectional identities that make up the cohorts. The 12 to 18 month Women of Color LeadStrong Fellowship centers healing and wellbeing, including deep rest and nourishment as the foundation to create a community of practice. We cultivate these practices to shape our desired connections and shared experiences, fostering self-accountability, collaborative space creation, and mutual support. The curriculum emphasizes the interconnections among one's leadership philosophy, social sector analysis, systems change, liberating leadership, organizational structures, and advancing solidarity movement building.



LeadStrong is a transformative experience. Every gathering was cathartic, where I found myself unlearning inequitable non-profit norms and reimagining how to work in service of racial equity. I am honored to be in such a powerful cohort and am grateful for this experience.

Trisha Barua

Oakland Starting Smart and Strong





GRADUATING CLASS OF 2024

The **African American LeadStrong Fellowship** is designed for African American women's wisdom and leadership to be acknowledged, valued, and validated. It encourages the unapologetic cultivation of a rhythm of well-being, enabling leaders to operate from a sense of liberation, purpose, and abundance. The fellowship aims to foster personal and collective power to impact social change. Fellows embody their leadership philosophy from an integral space at the intersections of self-knowing, ancestral wisdoms, intelligence, healing, vision, and calling. The AAW LeadStrong curriculum, is adaptable based on the cohort's needs, while also centering five core areas: intrapersonal, interpersonal, communal, organizational, and sector and systems analysis.



When asked about how retreat is transformative, Sharing space with other Black women who understand and are unpacking how we show up and navigate the world. Building/creating our container was transformative for me because it went beyond the norm of community agreements. The retreat itself! The freedom to be was transformative for me.

Briana Tejuco
18 Reasons



GRADUATING CLASS OF 2025

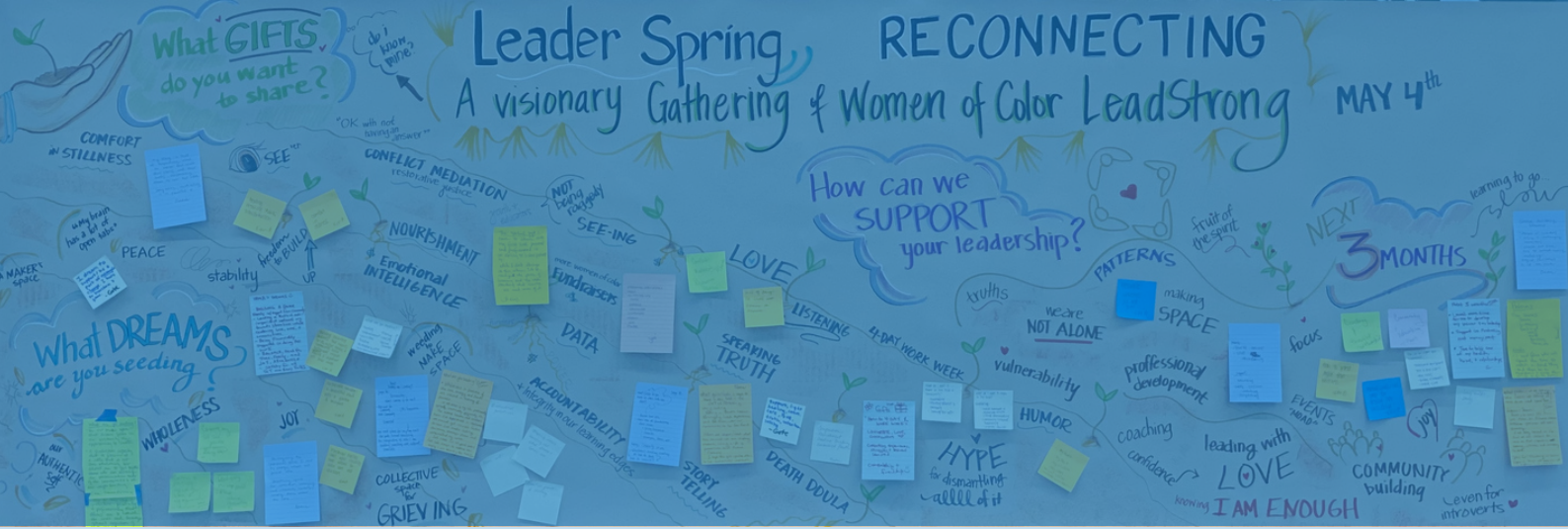
The Native American and Alaska Native Women's LeadStrong Fellowship is pioneering a co-creation model for the 18-month cohort. Each of the twelve participants will bring an area of personal, cultural, or professional expertise to the program to uplift the leader-full nature of the group, while developing presentation and facilitation skills in a nurturing, strengths-based environment. This framework supports the curation of a more culturally fluent and responsive leadership program, to enhance our fellows abilities to lead authentically, collaborate effectively, and make meaningful contributions within their communities.



**When asked about the significance of retreat,
The ability to share your story without explanation**

Esther Stauffer

Native American Health Center



The Fellowship offers a dedicated space for leaders to engage in thoughtful exploration of the persistent inequities within the social sector. It encourages participants to actively commit to self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-correction, fostering personal growth and development as leaders through inner work. This transformative journey extends beyond the individual, creating a collective space for participants to embark on a shared path of personal healing.

By delving into this deeply reflective process and critical analysis of the sector together, participants build a supportive community, fostering an environment conducive to heart-centered community work. This intentional focus on personal and collective building contributes to personal healing and creates a stronger sense of unity among leaders. This approach lays the foundation for more resilient, empathetic, and collaborative leadership within the social sector.

The program's impact is reflective in the accumulated data presented below, depicting insights derived from all our LeadStrong cohorts spanning from 2019 to 2023. This statistical representation unveils the effectiveness of our approach in empowering leaders, which allows our work to prevail alongside distinct organizational identities and communities served.

THE POWER OF



Heart-Centered Leadership

TRANSCENDING BEYOND

transactional

DATA BY THE NUMBERS

10,698,152

Total Clients Served
by all cohorts

81%

Percentage of
organizations that
serve a majority low
income clients

73

Alumnae

39

Current Cohort Members

112

Total

24%

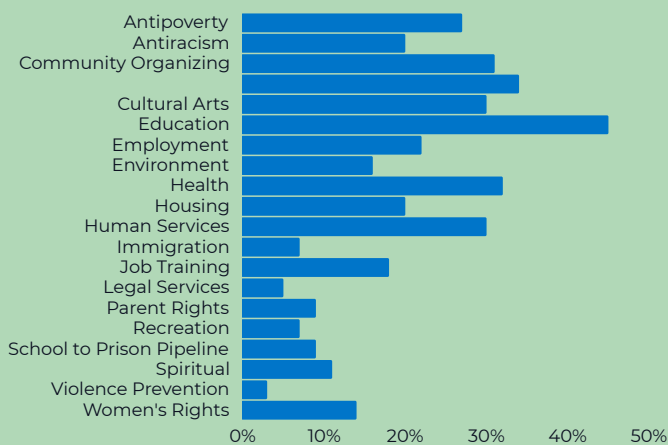
Percentage of leaders
who identify as
LGBTQIA+

12%

Percentage of
leaders who have
disability

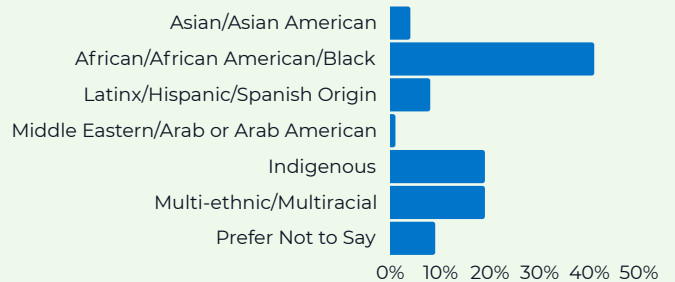
Women of Color LeadStrong Fellowship Program

AGENCY SERVICE AREAS



Disclaimer: Some organizations have the capacity of serving more than one area.

ETHNICITIES OF FELLOWS



2023 FINANCIAL

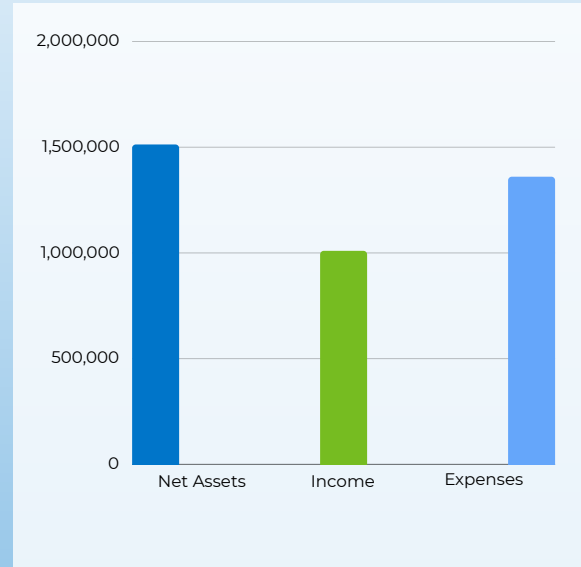
report

YEAR-END FINANCIALS:

Beginning Net Assets: \$1,513,006

Income: \$1,009,916

Expenses: \$1,360,533



FELLOWSHIP COSTS:



WOC LEADSTRONG, CLASS OF 2023
12 MONTHS (JAN - DEC)



AAW LEADSTRONG, CLASS OF 2024
9 MONTHS (MAR - DEC)



NAANW LEADSTRONG, CLASS OF 2025
3 MONTHS (OCT - DEC)

DIRECT FELLOWSHIP/ ALUMNI COSTS 2023	FELLOWSHIP	ALUMNI
LeadStrong Direct Costs	\$485,640	\$85,798
LeaderSpring Administration	\$394,789	\$138,958
Total:	\$880,428	\$224,756

LOOKING

Ahead

The impact of LeaderSpring Center resonates through the shared legacy of our leaders, spanning both past and present. A testament to this legacy is our esteemed Alumni Network, comprised of 294 alumni who have emerged from the transformative Women of Color LeadStrong and legacy Fellowships. This network will serve as a dynamic hub fostering ongoing engagement, marked by leadership coaching, curated workshops, convenings, events, and collaborative opportunities.

These offerings will be uniquely designed to address the needs and aspirations of our community, ensuring that our alumni continue to thrive in their roles as influential leaders.

To discern and respond effectively to the evolving needs of our alumni post-fellowship, this year we conducted an Alumni Snapshot Survey. This insightful evaluation, led by Cynthia Taylor, LSC alumna class of 2015, revealed key findings and aspirations:

- A demand for forums addressing contemporary leadership challenges.
- A desire for short-term, one-to-two coaching sessions, akin to a coaching hotline.
- A request for a workshop focused on shared leadership principles.
- A need for strategies to navigate resistance to the equity movement.

In response to these identified needs, our alumni have proactively recommended practical solutions:

- Regularly update mobile contacts and establish class text groups as an alternative to e-newsletters.
- Offer hybrid in-person and virtual gatherings to accommodate busy schedules and reduce participation barriers.
- Consider an affordable online pay-for virtual leadership coaching hotline.
- Enhance access to the alumni network roster on the LeaderSpring website.
- Facilitate a workshop guiding organizations through post-COVID era challenges, emphasizing technology integration and day-to-day operations, including service delivery and programming.
- Implement HR practices supporting equity-focused hiring processes within organizations.

This Alumni Snapshot Survey underscores our commitment to ensuring that the Women of Color LeadStrong Fellowship continues to center the voices of our leaders beyond their fellowship experience. To deliver pivotal value, empowering our alums to navigate the complex landscape of contemporary leadership with resilience and impact.



OUR SUPPORTERS



WE RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR INDIVIDUAL GIVERS:

Renato Almanzor

Ruth Goldman

Stacy Kono

Karen Anselmo

Patricia Hudson

F Noel Perry

Cynthia Chavez

Steve Jones

Johanna Valle S.

Thank you for your continued support!



POWER WITHOUT LOVE IS RECKLESS AND ABUSIVE, AND LOVE WITHOUT POWER IS SENTIMENTAL AND ANEMIC. POWER AT ITS BEST IS LOVE IMPLEMENTING THE DEMANDS OF JUSTICE, AND JUSTICE AT ITS BEST IS POWER CORRECTING EVERYTHING THAT STANDS AGAINST LOVE.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

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