

From the Columbus Business First:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/news/2020/08/17/leadership-columbus-class-of-2021.html>

Exclusive: Leadership Columbus announces its Class of 2021

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Leadership Columbus is set to embark on what's certainly the most unusual year in the community leadership program's long history.

The organization has chosen its latest class of future community champions, bringing in 58 participants for a hybrid of in-person and virtual training and networking to comply with the realities of life during the global coronavirus pandemic.

This year's class includes participants from the region's corporate, nonprofit and government sectors, such as AEP, Crane Group, CoverMyMeds, Nationwide, the city's police and fire departments, and several of the area's banks and law firms.

See the Class of 2021 in the attached gallery with photos, names and companies for all the class members.

Robbie Banks, Leadership Columbus' interim executive director, said this year will be different for a couple reasons, not just the disruptions from the pandemic.

"We were able to successfully transition from in-person to virtual programming for the last four months of the Class of 2020's program year, and we will have in-person, hybrid and virtual plans in place for Class of 2021's program year," she said in an email. "The events of 2020 have magnified racial inequities; therefore, addressing racism as a leadership issue in our curriculum will be an enhancement for the coming year."

Banks took over in July for the organization's longtime leader, Laurie Stein Marsh, who retired after three decades at the helm. Banks acknowledged it's been a "challenging time," but said the organization is carrying on.



Leadership Columbus has seen nearly 3,000 graduates since its start in 1974-75.

“This program year is not going to be perfect, but as a community leadership program, we don’t have time to pause even if that’s the most convenient thing to do,” she said. “We’re going to press on, and it’s incumbent upon us to do that.”

“To have employers invest in their employees right now and individuals’ desire to become community stewards is a testament that the need for strong leadership does not stop – even during a global pandemic.”

The Class of 2021 is the 47th for Leadership Columbus’ flagship program, which has graduated nearly 3,000 participants in that time.

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