



*Leaders Engaged and Activated
to Drive System-wide change*

LEADS Announces Third Merrimack Valley Cohort and Plans for Expansion to the North Shore

LEADS (Leaders Engaged and Activated to Drive System wide change) is an Innovative Program expanding the Leadership Capacity, Connectivity and Social Capital of leaders in the Gateway Cities of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LAWRENCE, MA--The LEADS Fellowship program has announced the selection of 65 Fellows who will participate in the final Merrimack Valley (MV) cohort, comprised of diverse, cross-sectoral leaders from Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill. The announcement was accompanied by a commitment from LEADS to expand its footprint into the North Shore with its next Regional Impact Cluster (RIC) scheduled for 2022. “The impact we have seen from the first two cohorts of Fellows in the Merrimack Valley has been absolutely transformational. We know it will only grow in size and impact as we expand geographically, putting more leaders around the state through our intensive fellowship program and growing the LEADS network,” stated Co-founder and Executive Director, Pam Hallagan.

Piloted in Lawrence in 2018, LEADS expanded to Lowell and Haverhill in 2020, offering hybrid programming through the pandemic. LEADS was initially created as an executive leadership program developed between local leaders and Harvard Business School faculty and staff, and has evolved as a platform for collective action. Through the program, various efforts have been catalyzed to address some of the most pressing issues at the community and regional level, including affordable housing, downtown revitalization, food security and more. Kerri Perry, Executive Director of Community Action, Inc. in Haverhill and a member of the recent MV RIC, described a cross-sectoral effort that was created through the program, “The food initiative creates a scalable systems-level change in Haverhill, connecting food manufacturers and farmers with excess food to local pantries in need of food to distribute. It keeps locally grown and produced food local, cuts down on transportation, and develops strong connections of people with the similar goal of caring for their neighbors in need.”

The 65 fellows recently selected into the third MV cohort represent the diversity of Lowell, Lawrence and Haverhill. The majority of this cohort is people of color, and includes business and non-profit executives, public officials, and faith leaders. Evan Silverio, the President and CEO of the Silverio Group and one of the newly selected fellows, remarked, “I am excited to participate in the LEADS program because I truly believe that improving our communities is a constant and collective responsibility that we should all contribute to. Through the LEADS program, I get to be aligned with influential leaders from across the region in an effort to bring about positive change through learning, connecting and promoting creative ideas for the benefit of our communities.”



*Leaders Engaged and Activated
to Drive System-wide change*

LEADS has partnered closely with the Lowell Plan, the Lawrence Partnership, and the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce to deliver the fellowship in the Merrimack Valley. With plans to expand to other regions, the organization increased its leadership capacity with Derek Mitchell joining as President to work alongside Pam Hallagan. The final Merrimack Valley cohort, as well as partnership development and recruitment in the North Shore are both scheduled to launch in the fall of 2021.

For more details on LEADS and the fellowship program, visit www.leadsmma.org.

CONTACT

Derek Mitchell, President

Derek.Mitchell@leadsmma.org

(978) 804-6989