

# Ascending Training Institute Attracts Hundreds of Young Men of Color to Close Literacy Gaps in Underserved Communities

*Leading Men Fellowship program improves reading proficiency amongst children in historically marginalized communities, while diversifying the teacher pipeline*

CINCINNATI, OHIO, UNITED STATES, August 22, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More than 100 young men of color from around the county are answering the call to help close the literacy gap in underserved and marginalized communities.

“

It's an honor to see such an amazing group of young men of color step up and answer the call to service at our Ascend Training Institute to help others in their community.”

*Ivan Douglas, national director of the Leading Men Fellowship*

Traveling from as far away as Atlanta, Georgia and Phoenix, Arizona, the young men, ages 18-24, came to Cincinnati, Ohio to attend [the Leading Men Fellowship's](#) annual Ascend Training Institute, held Aug. 13-18.

The Ascend Training Institute prepares young men of color to provide evidence-based literacy support to pre-kindergarten students to help close the literacy gap in early childhood education.

The theme for this year's Ascend Training Institute was “Answer the Call,” which is what the newest cohort of Fellows is already doing, according to Ivan Douglas, national director of [The Literacy Lab's](#) Leading Men Fellowship.

“It's an honor to see such an amazing group of young men of color step up and answer the call to service at our Ascend Training Institute to help others in their community,” said Douglas. “This annual training also sets the stage for our Fellows to experience opportunities for both professional and personal development throughout the school year.”

The new cohort of Fellows will be placed in pre-K classrooms and early learning centers for the entirety of the 2023-2024 school year to provide early literacy instruction to increase kindergarten readiness.

Additionally, The Literacy Lab will offer the Fellows professional and personal development opportunities throughout the school year while the Fellows also serve as role models for young students of color.

"I never had a role model when I was in school and it's something I'll never forget," said 18-year-old Tusheon Reece, who is part of the Leading Men Fellowship program in Phoenix. "Being part of the Leading Men Fellowship allows me to touch the hearts, souls and minds of my students and be a positive role model in their lives."

Data shows the high school dropout rate is reduced by 40 percent when an economically disadvantaged Black male has at least one Black teacher in elementary school, yet less than 2% of all teachers in the country are men of color.



Hundreds of young men of color from across the country traveled to Cincinnati to attend The Literacy Lab's annual Ascend Training Institute.

The Leading Men Fellowship empowers and equips young men of color, ages 18-24, with opportunities in the field of education by serving as paid pre-K literacy tutors to help close the literacy gap in underserved and marginalized communities. The Fellowship currently has programming in seven regions throughout the country, including: Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Cincinnati, Ohio; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Phoenix, Arizona; Portsmouth and Richmond, Virginia; and Washington, D.C.

For more information about The Literacy Lab's Leading Men Fellowship, visit [theliteracylab.org/leading-men](http://theliteracylab.org/leading-men) or email [lmf@theliteracylab.org](mailto:lmf@theliteracylab.org).

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#### About The Leading Men Fellowship

The Literacy Lab's Leading Men Fellowship creates opportunities for young men of color and increases representation in the field of education. Leading Men Fellows are young men of color who have recently graduated from high school and participate in a year-long, residency-style experience in which they provide evidence-based literacy support to pre-kindergarten students

while receiving robust coaching and professional development and gaining valuable experience.

#### About The Literacy Lab

The Literacy Lab is a national non-profit organization that provides students – in communities experiencing racial and/or economic inequities – with evidence-based, culturally responsive literacy instruction as preparation for academic, professional, and personal success. The Literacy Lab partners with school districts to help achieve attainment gains by embedding full-time, rigorously trained tutors in early childhood centers and elementary schools.

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