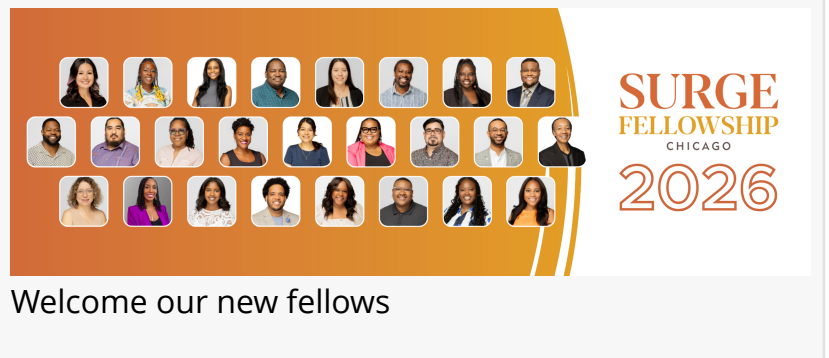


Surge Institute Welcomes the 2026 Chicago Fellowship Cohort

25 leaders join the 2026 Surge Fellowship Chicago to grow as changemakers, advancing equity and justice in education.

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Surge Fellowship Chicago is proud to welcome 25 emerging leaders into the 2026 Chicago Fellowship cohort. These individuals are beginning a transformative 10-month experience designed to accelerate their leadership, amplify their impact, and empower them as agents of change in their communities.



“

I am incredibly honored to welcome this exceptional group of leaders into the 2026 Surge Fellowship. Each brings a unique perspective and unwavering commitment to transforming education”

Ulric Shannon

Throughout the fellowship, participants will sharpen their leadership toolkit—focusing on executive skills, problem-solving, and teamwork—as they explore complex issues rooted in historical inequities within the education system and broader political context.

Ulric Shannon, Executive Director of Surge Chicago, shared:

“I am incredibly honored to welcome this exceptional group of leaders into the 2026 Chicago Surge Fellowship. Each brings a unique perspective and unwavering commitment to transforming education in our

communities. I’m confident they will grow as leaders and advocates for justice and equity in education.”

MEET THE 2026 CHICAGO FELLOWSHIP

Alejandra Sandoval Martinez — Teacher Development Coach, National Louis University
Amber Henderson — Principal, ESD159 Matteson
Cheyane Bligen — Senior Associate, Public Affairs, The Chicago Public Education Fund
Darnell Motley — Assistant Professor, University of Chicago

Dr. Nicole Billings — Assessment Manager, Chicago Public Schools
Eric Steen — Site Director, The Hidden Genius Project
Eron Godi — Special Projects Manager, LEARN Charter School Network
Jamie L. Enge — College and Career Equity Specialist, Chicago Public Schools
Jorge Alaves — School Counselor, Lindblom Math & Science Academy (CPS)
Juan Pablo Esquivel — Science Learning Specialist, Noble School
Kadeem Fuller — Associate Director of Recruiting, COOP Careers
Kendra Turner — Director of School Quality & Support, Chicago Public Schools
Keviyona Ray — Principal, CPS – Asa Philip Randolph Magnet School
Nino Rodriguez — Scholar-Practitioner, r3volutionino
SaShay Butler — Assistant Director, Student Enrichment Services (Northwestern University)
Shannon R. Keys — Director of Regional High School Programs, The Academy Group
Shinon Allen — Impact Director, City Year Chicago
Tatiana L. Roberts — Director & Assistant Professor, First Year Academic Experience, National Louis University
Joshua Johnson — Equity Professional Learning Specialist, Chicago Public Schools (Office of Equity)
Katrina Miller — Program Manager, Computer Science/STEM, Chicago Public Schools
Edith Flores — Alumni Success Coach Lead, Noble Schools
Margarita Lachica — Assistant Principal, Acero
Kristin Moore — Chief of Program and Impact, NewRoot Learning Institute
Lisset Rosales - Mentor, Golden Apple
Román Ahmed — Growth Strategist, Innovare

A signature offering from Surge Institute, the Surge Fellowship is a best-in-class, cohort-based leadership development program tailored for emerging leaders of color in education. The program fosters individual and collective growth through racial healing, community connection, and movement-building. A key feature is the Freedom Dreams Project, a capstone where fellows design and present major projects inspired by their visions for equity, community, and justice.

Founded in Chicago to diversify the educational leadership pipeline, the Surge Fellowship has since expanded its reach nationwide, nurturing transformative leaders across the country. Its success is supported by a broad network of [Chicago funders, investors](#), and community partners who believe deeply in the potential of this cohort and the broader Surge community.

About Surge Institute

Surge Institute is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 2014 with the mission to develop and elevate leaders of color who enact transformative change for children, families, and communities. Since its founding by Carmita Semaan, Surge has been dedicated to creating authentic and powerful leadership development experiences. [Learn more at surgeinstitute.org](https://surgeinstitute.org).

Gregory Johnson
Surge Institute

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