Institute of the Americas Opens Applications for Inaugural CaliBaja North American Leadership Academy

Selective 11-month program will bring together 20 emerging leaders from San Diego and Imperial Counties and Baja California.

LA JOLLA, CA, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Institute of the Americas today opened applications for the inaugural 2026–27 cohort of the CaliBaja North American Leadership Academy, a selective, cohort-based program designed to prepare emerging leaders to work across borders, sectors and systems. Applications will be accepted through October 16, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

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> *Richard Kiy, President & CEO, Institute of the Americas*

The Academy will select up to 20 Fellows, primarily ages 26–40, from San Diego and Imperial Counties and Baja California. It seeks candidates with demonstrated initiative and influence in business, state and local government, public service, civil society, policy, philanthropy, academia, arts, culture and related fields. Applicants should be committed to advancing their careers in the CaliBaja region with a broader binational and North American perspective.

"CaliBaja's opportunities and its most difficult challenges extend across jurisdictional and institutional boundaries," said Richard Kiy, President and CEO of the Institute of the Americas. "The Academy will invest in a new generation of leaders who can build trust, mobilize diverse partners and turn the region's interdependence into practical cooperation and shared prosperity."

The 11-month hybrid curriculum combines faculty-led digital preparation with in-person sessions, field visits and stakeholder dialogue across the region. Fellows will receive training in adaptive leadership, cross-cultural communication and human-centered design; examine the history, political economy and institutions of North America and CaliBaja; and apply their learning to regional cases and team-based capstone projects presented at a public symposium. "This is designed to be a working leadership network, not simply a course of study," said Chris

Nyce, Director of Economic Competitiveness at the Institute of the Americas. “Fellows will learn with practitioners, scholars, business leaders and community voices on both sides of the border, then use those relationships and tools to develop practical responses to shared regional challenges.”

The curriculum will address issues of North American economic competitiveness, the CaliBaja’s innovation economy, the Imperial Valley–Mexicali opportunity, migration and lawful mobility, security, energy and water, cross-border mobility (transportation, housing access, workforce development) and social entrepreneurship. The inaugural cohort begins with orientation on December 3–4, 2026.



IOA launches the CaliBaja North American Leadership Academy

Up to 10 full-tuition merit scholarships are planned through the Bersin-Nathanson Fellowship. Spanish fluency is desirable but not required; most sessions will be conducted in English. Applicants must be able to sustain the full program commitment and obtain employer support. Program details and online application: https://institute.iamericas.org/calibaja/

About the CaliBaja North American Leadership Academy
Led and managed by the Institute of the Americas, the Academy is being developed with regional and learning partners including the UC San Diego Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies, UC San Diego Design Lab, CETYS Universidad, the University of Houston, and San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. Adaptive leadership training will be offered in conjunction with Harvard Online. The Academy is made possible by early support from the Bersin-Foster Fund at the Jewish Community Foundation San Diego and the Alumbra Innovations Foundation.

About the Institute of the Americas
For more than four decades, the Institute of the Americas has promoted sound public policy and cooperation across the Western Hemisphere. Co-located on the campus of the University of California, San Diego, the IOA serves as a catalyst for positive change, focusing on the private sector to encourage economic and social reforms, enhanced collaboration, and strong political and economic relations between Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States, and Canada.

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