From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate LEDA’s 20th year, I am so proud to share our first-ever Annual Report, which details our accomplishments over the last year and showcases the tangible impact of our collective efforts. With your help, LEDA has made significant progress, from enhancing our recruitment efforts to reach the most deserving prospective Scholars, to offering more comprehensive career and academic support.

Our Scholars and Alumni are making their mark, achieving remarkable success in their academic and professional lives: our newest class of undergraduates matriculated at 40 colleges, while our Alumni continue to thrive as entrepreneurs, researchers, lawyers, and public servants. I am proud to share this and so much more in our 2023 Annual Report.

As we celebrate these achievements, we also recognize that they are stepping stones on the path to greater impact. I am thrilled to share that later this year, our 20th Scholar Cohort will be the first to participate in our expanded Aspects of Leadership Summer Institute, which will include one week of instruction at Yale University. LEDA and Yale have long enjoyed a mutually beneficial partnership; since LEDA’s inception, nearly 100 LEDA Scholars have matriculated at Yale. We are honored to build upon our relationship with Yale, and continue our two-decades long collaboration with Princeton University, through the Summer Institute, and amplify the impact we can have on connecting deserving students from underserved communities to unparalleled academic opportunities.

The coming year promises strategic growth and innovation for LEDA. We plan to enhance our career development programming, continue to build connection and support for our Alumni community, and offer opportunities for our partners – you! - to engage with us at events throughout the year. Your ongoing support is essential to these efforts. It allows us to keep making a difference in the lives of exceptional students who, with our help, can overcome barriers to success.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for being a part of our journey. I hope this report fills you with pride for all we have accomplished, and ambition for a future in which we continue to empower the next generation of leaders.

Sincerely,

David Garza
Executive Director
About LEDA

Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) empowers a community of exceptional young leaders from under-resourced backgrounds by supporting their higher education and professional success in order to create a more inclusive and equitable country.

For 20 years, LEDA has been helping these talented students access top-tier colleges and providing them with the tools necessary to succeed in their careers and beyond. Through this work, LEDA seeks to ensure that this country’s leadership is truly reflective of its citizenry. LEDA’s vision is to build an inclusive and equitable America where leadership reflects, celebrates, and supports diverse perspectives.

LEDA’s programs are completely free and comprise a longitudinal initiative designed to address the specific challenges faced by high-achieving, under-resourced students in accessing the leadership pipeline. This program trajectory includes two components: the LEDA Scholars Program and LEDA Career and Alumni Services.

“Through the LEDA, I gained a community that not only empowered me, but helped me reach my academic and professional goals. At LEDA, for the very first time, I felt like a post-secondary education was possible and attainable.”

– VERÓNICA · MATTAWA, WA
LEDA Cohort 4, University of Washington, Seattle ’09

Our Leadership

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*Indicates LEDA alumni
**The LEDA Scholars Program**

The LEDA Scholars Program specializes in identifying outstanding student leaders. Over the past 20 years, the diverse LEDA Community of Scholars and Alumni have come from 49 States and the District of Columbia.

- **2,073** young leaders are part of the LEDA Community
- **68%** of LEDA Scholars are first-generation college students
- **51%** of LEDA Scholars have enrolled in Ivy League institutions, MIT, or Stanford
- **88%** of LEDA Scholars have enrolled in one of the top 100 colleges in the U.S.
- **92%+** of LEDA Scholars graduate from college within six years, compared to the national six-year graduation rate of less than 48% for students from low-income backgrounds
- **40%** of LEDA Scholars pursue a graduate or professional degree after college

**Socioeconomic Background**
- Under-resourced communities
- Average household income of $36,800 per year
- First-generation college students given particular consideration

**Academic Qualifications**
- Unweighted GPA of at least 3.5
- Enrollment in rigorous courses when possible (honors, AP, IB, dual enrollment)
- Strong analytical reading and writing skills, demonstrating potential to succeed at selective colleges and universities

**Personal Attributes**
- Desire to be challenged academically
- Strong commitment to their studies
- Desire to be a leader in their families, schools, and communities
- Connection to LEDA's Core Values of Excellence, Integrity, Compassion, and Community
The LEDA Experience: Recruitment and Admissions

Each year, LEDA recruits 100 exceptional high school students who demonstrate leadership potential and would benefit from additional support as they navigate their journey to and through college. Applicants complete a rigorous three-part application process, mirroring the admissions process for highly selective colleges and universities.

LEDA’s Recruitment Strategy

- Builds relationships with schools and organizations that serve underrepresented students to ensure a diverse Scholar Community
- Leverages partnerships with nonprofit organizations whose missions align with that of LEDA
- Uses in-person visits to schools to connect with students, counselors, and community partners
- Engagement current Scholars to recruit applicants from their high school alma maters and the broader community of prospective applicants
- Hosts virtual programs for students to learn about LEDA and connect with staff
- Collaborates with counselors and teachers to identify excellent student-leaders

In 2023, LEDA:

- Conducted outreach to more than 4,100 high schools and nearly 1,200 community-based organizations, reaching more than 15,000 contacts to recruit outstanding applicants.
- Received more than 1,100 applications by December for our programs. LEDA reviewed every application thoroughly, and finalists participated in interviews.
- Welcomed 98 new LEDA Scholars to Cohort 19. They represent 36 states and territories and attend 93 high schools. 86% of the Cohort will be first-generation college students.
The LEDA Experience: the LEDA Summer Institute

LEDA Scholars spend the summer between their junior and senior year in high school with their LEDA Cohort at the LEDA Summer Institute, traditionally housed on the campus of Princeton University. This intensive, residential five-week program is free of charge for LEDA Scholars and includes leadership study, writing instruction, standardized test preparation, college guidance, and community-building with peers of similar backgrounds.

Summer Institute activities include:

- **Aspects of Leadership**: According to LEDA Scholars, *Aspects of Leadership* is unlike any course they have experienced before. In small discussion sections and workshops, they examine the root causes of social issues and potential solutions. The course prepares them for the college seminar experience and emphasizes learning from peers: Scholars learn about the experiences, strengths, and challenges of communities all over the U.S. Applying these lessons to their own communities, they develop Community Impact Projects to implement during their final year of high school.

- **Writing Instruction**: LEDA Writing Instructors teach academic writing at schools like Columbia, Tufts, and USC. They help Scholars begin the transition from high school writing to the writing that selective colleges expect and guide Scholars as they write their college application essays throughout the fall. Writing classes, limited to 13 Scholars each, meet twice per week are supplemented by weekly one-on-one conferences with a Writing Instructor.

- **Standardized Test Preparation**: Tutoring is provided by Advantage Testing, a leading tutoring company based in New York. Scholars are provided with preparation materials for the SAT and ACT, attend classes, and take practice tests.

- **College Guidance**: Scholars research the wide range of colleges available, learn the mechanics of the college application and financial aid process for selective colleges, and engage with admissions representatives and current college students. With personal support from their College Guidance team, they design a balanced college list based on their unique fit factors. LEDA College Guidance Counselors continue to work closely with every Scholar after they return home to support them throughout the college application process.

- **Community Building and Residential Life**: The LEDA Community sets us apart from other programs. Our Residential Life program is designed to foster empowerment and a strong sense of community among the Scholars as they live in a Princeton University dormitory and experience a taste of campus life.

**In 2023, LEDA:**

Provided more than 650 hours of one-on-one advising and nearly 100 hours of academic, leadership development, and college guidance classes during the Summer Institute.

650+ hours
The LEDA Experience: College Guidance

LEDA Scholars leave the Summer Institute with a college list and a clear understanding of the college application process. Throughout their senior year, LEDA’s staff continues to support Scholars every step of the way.

LEDA’s College Guidance team:

- Provides feedback on all college application materials, including expert support on all application essays
- Covers costs for standardized tests and application fees
- Counsels Scholars and their families throughout the process of applying for financial aid
- Helps Scholars identify and complete applications for scholarship opportunities
- Submits detailed recommendation letters to highlight and contextualize the unique achievements of each Scholar
- Advocates for Scholars with college admissions and financial aid offices
- Advises Scholars and families throughout the college enrollment process to ensure that they have the information they need to choose the best college for them

In 2023, LEDA:

Achieved a **100% college admission rate** for our high school Scholars (LEDA Cohort 18), including **97% to a top 100 college** and **55% to an Ivy, MIT, or Stanford**.

89% of Cohort 18 matriculated at one of the top 100 colleges in the U.S.

Helped Cohort 18 receive **42 prestigious scholarships** from national organizations, including the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, the Gates Foundation, the Dell Scholars Program, the Jackie Robinson Foundation, and the Ron Brown Scholar Program.
The LEDA Experience: College Success

LEDA prioritizes maintaining close relationships with Scholars throughout their college careers and beyond. We help students navigate the transition from high school to college and assist them throughout their college careers to become exemplary students and campus leaders both by connecting them with resources at their colleges and supplementing those resources according to individual Scholars’ needs.

LEDA helps Scholars succeed and lead in college and beyond by:

- Conducting check-ins with college Scholars, with particular emphasis during the first-year transition
- Recommending resources on campus and at LEDA to facilitate success and involvement
- Connecting first-years with highly trained LEDA Peer Mentors on their campus or in their region
- Organizing community events on college campuses
- Supporting college Scholars with annual financial aid applications and emergency grants
- Writing recommendations for scholarship, employment, and leadership opportunities

In 2023, LEDA:

Conducted 642 individual meetings with undergraduate students. Our specialized peer mentor program for first-year students, which connects them with older LEDA undergraduates, produced an additional 172 mentorship meetings.

Visited 14 college campuses to coordinate LEDA Community events, such as group dinners and mixers, throughout the year.
The LEDA Experience: LEDA Career Network

The LEDA Career Network prepares students for future leadership roles, serving LEDA Career Fellows (admitted to the Career Network within their first two years of college), LEDA Scholars in college, and Scholar/Fellow alumni.

Newly admitted Career Fellows attend our annual LEDA Career Institute, a multi-day event where they engage with a number of employers, receive coaching from seasoned professionals, learn about career opportunities in a broad range of industries, and develop the professional skills needed to navigate the job search process.

After the Career Institute, LEDA provides ongoing support with career exploration, career planning, professional development, and employer engagement. Fellows who complete a course of LEDA-led and corporate partner programming, which builds upon the topics, preparation strategies, and techniques learned at the Career Institute, receive a certificate of completion.

Career Network Services

- Résumé, cover letter, LinkedIn, and application feedback
- Access to a robust professional network including employers, LEDA alumni, Scholars, Career Fellows, Board Members, and other stakeholders
- Interview preparation, networking guidance, remote and in-person professional development workshops, job search support, and individual career coaching
- Targeted recruitment for competitive internship and full-time opportunities
- Advising and support for the exploration of post-graduate pathways, including graduate school planning and exploration of research and fellowship opportunities

About Our Career Fellows

LEDA Career Fellows are high-achieving, under-resourced students who attend some of the most selective colleges in the nation. The information below presents a snapshot of our 2023 Fellows.

97% identify as people of color

77% are first-generation college students

41 colleges are represented in total

LEDA by the Numbers
LEDA Employer Partners participate in the LEDA Career Institute, conduct webinars, and host industry insight events. Employer Partners also host virtual events during the academic year to help Career Fellows further develop professional skills and expand their knowledge of a wide range of industries. Many Employer Partners ultimately recruit Career Fellows for internships and full-time opportunities that are shared through LEDA’s e-newsletters, email blasts, and social media.

Employer Partner Activities

- Information sessions covering diverse career options
- Office hours with employees in a variety of roles
- Professional development workshops
- Individualized career coaching
- Industry-specific panels
- Site visits to offices in cities where LEDA students and alumni reside

In 2023, LEDA Employer Partners offered:

43 hours of in-person and virtual programming, more than 20 hours of one-on-one career mentoring, and four site visits to Employer Partners’ offices in New York City.

63 hours of student engagement

Participating Employer Partners
Launched in early 2023, LEDA Legal helps high-achieving participants explore legal careers, navigate the application process, and ultimately gain admission to the best law schools in the nation. Cohorts are comprised of LEDA Scholars, Career Fellows, and Alumni, all of whom have been chosen via a selective and holistic application process. This program is possible thanks to our founding collaborators: the Advantage Testing Foundation, New York University School of Law, Harvard Law School, and Yale Law School.

“When I was applying to college, being a LEDA Scholar provided an unparalleled opportunity for genuine community and exam preparation. I knew that being a part of LEDA Legal would provide similar benefits. I envision that LEDA Legal will continue to produce aspiring lawyers who eventually change the way law is taught, understood, and practiced, by bringing more diverse leaders into the playing field.”

– DANIELLE • CLEVELAND, OH
LEDA Cohort 12, Yale University ’21

2023 Activities

- 54 hours of Advantage Testing’s LSAT prep curriculum
- 10 full-length practice LSAT exams
- Five panels on career exploration and pathways in law
- Three workshops presented by our founding law school collaborators
- Six-hour admissions fair hosted by 12 top law schools exclusively for LEDA
- More than 20 hours in group writing workshops and law school support sessions
- Networking and advising from more than 30 volunteer mentors who are law professionals

2023 LEDA Legal Partners

- Akin
- Clifford Chance LLP
- Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP
- Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP
- Friedman Kaplan Seiler Adelman & Robbins LLP
- Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP
- Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP
- Kirkland & Ellis LLP
- Latham & Watkins LLP
- Linklaters LLP
- Milbank LLP
- Morgan, Lewis, & Bockius LLP
- Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP
- Ropes & Gray LLP
- Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP
- Selendy Gay Elsberg PLLC
- Sidney Austin LLP
- Sullivan & Cromwell LLP
- Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP
Where Are They Now?

LEDA Alumni in the World

More than 950 LEDA Scholars have graduated from college and are pursuing exciting careers and graduate study, including:

JOSUÉ FROM UNION CITY, NJ
Cornell University ’20: M.B.A. candidate at Harvard Business School

HARSAN FROM FRESNO, CA
Princeton University ’15: Product Manager at Clubhouse

NARIZZA FROM MOUNTAIN VIEW, HI
Columbia University ’21: Assistant, Global Property Solutions & Operations at CAA

CHRISTINA FROM NEW YORK, NY
Haverford College ’13: Therapist at Catholic Guardian Services

MEAGAN FROM MCALLEN, TX
Georgetown University ’13: Program Advisor at Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

KENDALL FROM BRONX, NY
Vassar College ’11: Senior Manager and Diversity & Inclusion Lead for Americas Region at LEGO Group

LEDA Alumni Network

The LEDA Alumni Network provides LEDA Alumni with opportunities to receive post-graduate career and graduate school planning support and advising through the Career Network and to remain engaged with and give back to the LEDA Community.

Alumni Network Goals

• Engage LEDA college alumni more fully in the LEDA Community

• Continue to cultivate the leadership potential of LEDA alumni through professional opportunities and networking

• Connect alumni, and their employers when possible, to the LEDA Career Network

• Create a platform for LEDA alumni to “give back” through volunteerism, mentorship, and financial support

“It was amazing how easily my Cohort-mates and I fell into comfortable friendship with one another after years of not seeing each other. The LEDA Community was waiting to warmly welcome me back.”

– TANIA • GARY, IN
LEDA Cohort 9, Middlebury College ’18
LEDA Annual Celebration

Our 2023 Annual Celebration was held on May 3 at the Edison Ballroom in New York City. This remarkable night gathered almost 300 guests and raised nearly $900,000 to support our extraordinary LEDA Scholars, Career Fellows, and Alumni.

We were thrilled to engage with our honorees, Marcus Shaw and Wemimo Abbey – phenomenal leaders who are also champions of education, diversity, equity, and inclusion – as they shared their insights into the foundational relationship between diversity and professional success. We also heard from LEDA Scholar Jaylen (below, lower-left), a sophomore at Columbia University, and our annual Alumni Honoree, Verónica Quintero (below, upper-left with Scholar emcees Rudy and Saiya), an Emmy-nominated journalist and LEDA Cohort 4 alumna. Both Jaylen and Verónica reflected on how LEDA has been the key resource that helped bring their dreams within reach.

“As I continue to work in honor of my parents’ sacrifices,” shared Verónica, “I keep going back to what motivated them – the chance of an opportunity. I can’t thank LEDA enough for empowering me to chase every opportunity imaginable.”

Hear more from our speakers and watch highlights from the evening at youtube.com/ledascholars. We hope you’ll join us for our next Annual Celebration!
LEDA Memories 2023
Monthly Giving Program

Deepen your impact by becoming a sustaining donor. Your recurring monthly donation will serve as the backbone of our efforts, providing LEDA with a reliable base of financial support.

Monthly giving provides:

Steady, unrestricted funding, enabling us to plan more effectively and focus on long-term strategies for success.

Increased efficiency by reducing the need for paperwork, saving resources for what matters most – our Scholars.

A community of care, sending a powerful message to our Scholars that there is a community that believes in their potential and is invested in their success, fostering a sense of belonging and motivation.

To begin your monthly commitment to LEDA’s success, visit ledascholars.org/monthly or scan the QR code.

For additional questions about planned giving or other ways to support LEDA, contact Claire W. Gallagher, Senior Director for Advancement & Strategic Initiatives, at clairegallagher@ledascholars.org.
Give with Confidence

LEDA has a four-star rating on Charity Navigator, the highest possible.

LEDA received a Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid, the highest possible.

Through high school and college, LEDA students receive at least $28,000 in services.

Visit ledascholars.org/donate or scan the QR code to make a fully tax-deductible donation.
Fiscal Summary

The information on this page is summarized from LEDA's most recently available audited financial statement. LEDA prides itself on financial accountability and transparency. Our complete financial statements, along with a report by our independent auditors, Lutz & Carr, are available on our website at ledascholars.org/financialstatements.

How LEDA spends every dollar:

79% of LEDA’s revenue goes directly into program services, which include the six-year trajectory of the LEDA Scholars Program, the LEDA Career Network, the LEDA Alumni Network, and LEDA Legal.

11% of LEDA’s revenue goes toward general and management expenses.

10% of LEDA’s revenue goes toward fundraising efforts, such as our Annual Celebration.
Our 2023 Supporters

LEDA is grateful for the generous supporters who enable us to continue identifying and empowering the leaders of tomorrow. We would like to recognize the following institutional donors whose commitments were crucial to LEDA’s success during Fiscal Year 2023, the period from September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2023.
Our 2023 Supporters

$25,000-$49,999
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- EY
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- SIDLEY
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gaye

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- Sullivan & Cromwell LLP
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LEDAScholarsProgram