



# Leadership

BATON ROUGE ALUMNI

## 2017-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Baton Rouge Area Leadership Program (Leadership) was founded in 1985 as a program of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) to prepare a diverse group of professionals for leadership positions in the community. Leadership Greater Baton Rouge Alumni (Alumni) was similarly established over 30 years ago to provide an opportunity for graduates of the program to continue their community involvement, fostering the spirit of belonging and pride by enabling alumni opportunities to remain connected and engaged with past and future program graduates. Although closely aligned to Leadership's core focus and mission, Alumni is a standalone organization comprised of more than 1100 graduates and 250 active, dues-paying members and led by a 21-member board of directors. This diverse membership base is one of the largest collections of community leaders in the Baton Rouge area; however, it also has the potential to be strengthened through a larger and more diverse membership base, with more than 75 percent of program graduates not currently active within Alumni.

### OUR MISSION

Leadership Alumni's mission is to educate and support diverse leaders who are committed to improving the quality of life in Baton Rouge.

### OUR VISION

Leadership Alumni seeks to be a catalyst for translating education into action by continually investing in the Leadership Baton Rouge program while connecting membership to meaningful community initiatives and each other.

### BY THE NUMBERS

**1100**  
LEADERSHIP GRADUATES

**250**  
ACTIVE ALUMNI MEMBERS

**21**  
MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

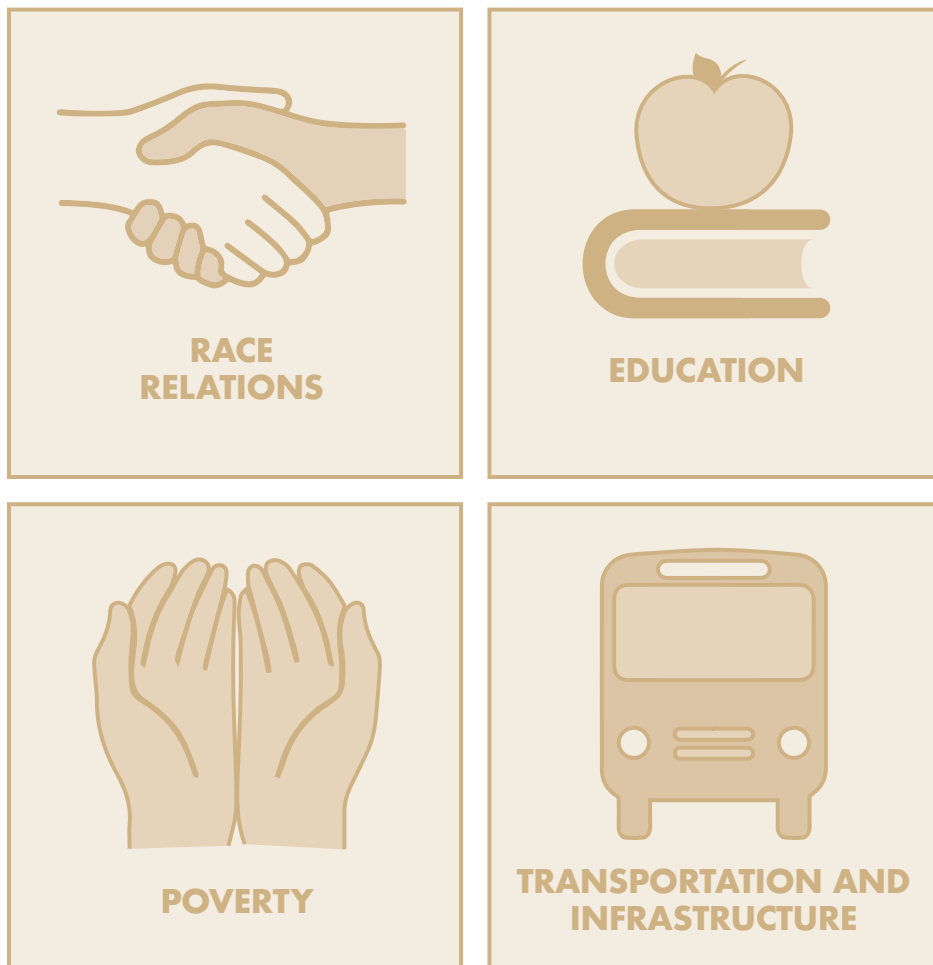
**75%**  
OF GRADUATES NOT ACTIVE WITH ALUMNI

In recognizing the collective force for community leadership of both Alumni and Leadership graduates – and the opportunities for leveraging this presence for the ongoing improvement of quality of life in Baton Rouge – the Alumni Board and executive leadership initiated a process in June 2016 to develop a strategic framework. This framework will aim to prioritize the organization’s efforts related to achieving its mission and growing its presence throughout the Baton Rouge community.

This process was influenced and guided by a series of one-on-one and small group discussions with Leadership graduates; an electronic survey distributed to all current or recent Alumni members; and a board retreat facilitated by Baton Rouge-based management and strategy consulting firm Emergent Method, during which the Alumni Board of Directors leveraged this research and Alumni member feedback toward the development of this framework.

## Community Improvement Focus Areas

Current Alumni membership identified four focus areas representing the most critical issues facing Baton Rouge over the next several years. These focus areas include race relations, education, poverty, and transportation and infrastructure. Given the emphasis placed on each focus area by members, these topics should be at the forefront of consideration for any new Alumni partnerships or initiatives as we move forward.



## Strategic Priority Framework

Each of the following strategic priorities is aligned with our vision for what Alumni will be as both an organization and leadership force for the Baton Rouge community. We recognize that as a volunteer-driven organization, there are limits to what we are able to undertake in terms of projects and resource-intensive efforts to educate and support community leaders. As such, we must be intentional about leveraging our connections with like-minded organizations leading the way in these areas without duplicating their efforts.



**CONNECT  
ALUMNI WITH  
COMMUNITY  
NEEDS AND  
EACH OTHER**

**LEVERAGE OUR  
COLLECTIVE  
IMPACT  
THROUGH  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS**

**RECONNECT  
ALUMNI WITH  
LEADERSHIP  
PROGRAM &  
PARTICIPANTS**

## CONNECT ALUMNI WITH COMMUNITY NEEDS AND EACH OTHER

Part of the appeal of joining Alumni is the opportunity to continue fostering relationships with fellow community leaders in the Baton Rouge area. While networking events such as socials and holiday gatherings have been well attended, many alumni would like more structured connections to other alumni for personal networking purposes, as well as introductions to community engagement opportunities. There is also a sense that while Leadership has a strong role in educating participants on social injustices within our community, we should actively help graduates translate that education into action through further development of leadership skills and facilitated connections to board service or volunteer opportunities.

### HOW WE GET THERE:

- » Continue hosting social, fundraising, and holiday events, but with a focus on identifying meaningful ways to connect members with one another via relevant industries or areas of interest
- » Leverage technology to facilitate connectivity through efforts such as:
  - Enhancing communication tools, including regularly deploying Alumni newsletter and social media posts that highlight Alumni accomplishments and timely opportunities for socialization or volunteering
  - Refining the Alumni database to include members' professional and volunteer associations, and repurposing its function as a tool for current Leadership participants and Alumni members to utilize in easily connecting to one another
  - The implementation and paid promotion of an Alumni Awareness Month with a focus on growing Alumni membership, promoting Alumni affiliation, and raising awareness of breadth of graduates throughout Baton Rouge
- » Provide a mechanism for community organizations to request support from Alumni members' time, talent, or treasure – particularly during disaster response or recovery situations
- » Provide opportunities for Alumni to apply for scholarships to take a next step in their community leadership journey, such as participating in LANO's Community Leaders Program or BRAC's Annual Canvas trips
- » Establish an Alumni community projects committee for those who would like to participate in volunteer opportunities with fellow Alumni members
- » Develop a networking program to match newer Alumni members with more established members
- » Create uniquely branded wearables, included in the price of annual dues, to increase community awareness of Alumni as a brand and organization, providing a consistent visual presence at community or volunteer events

## LEVERAGE OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In an effort to continue the cycle of education around community issues and needs initiated during Leadership, Alumni has historically produced continuing learning and educational events (CLEs), including Prospect Baton Rouge and Race N' Gravy. While such events are well-intended and mission-aligned, attendance has been lacking in recent years, which calls into question the return on investment in terms of volunteer time and corporate sponsorship. Alumni must shift from being an organization engaged in original programming – which can be time-intensive and duplicative with other community events or initiatives – toward one focused on partnering with like-minded organizations poised to grow such programming, primarily through our Community Improvement Focus Areas. Ultimately, through this new approach, we can leverage our voice, membership, and network more effectively.

### HOW WE GET THERE:

- » Connect members with opportunities to educate the public on Alumni's Community Improvement Focus Areas or related issues; for example:
  - Engage with partner organizations and events, such as hosting Alumni roundtables before or after events, having an Alumni member moderate events or panel discussions, or connecting members with related volunteer opportunities
- » Leverage the power of co-branding partnerships with organizations that share mission-driven objectives by creating a formal Request for Partnership process by which Alumni members can nominate organizations and events for Alumni to sponsor and/or partner with, or by which community organizations can submit to become a formal partner for a defined event or period of time
- » Design and implement a “signature fundraising event” to support Leadership participants and/or Alumni-related initiatives
- » Utilize enhanced Alumni communication tools to promote partner events
- » Expand upon benefits offered to Alumni, such as designating a portion of Alumni funds to allow members to attend educational events with partner organizations at a free or reduced rate

## RECONNECT ALUMNI WITH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM & PARTICIPANTS

Many Alumni members cite their experience in Leadership as the primary driver for their participation in Alumni; however, there has been little structured connectivity between these members and current program participants or Leadership itself in years past. This missed connection is an area of opportunity for our organization as it relates to furthering our mission, primarily in how we can intentionally provide current program participants or recent graduates with mentorship opportunities – tapping into the breadth, diversity, and relevance of our existing Alumni membership base – and support Leadership in the process.

### HOW WE GET THERE:

- » Develop an advisory committee to assist the program director in evaluating program content and other efforts as needed
- » Utilize advisory committee structure to foster a formal, ongoing dialogue between Alumni and BRAC with a focus on establishing a strong working relationship between the two organizations, such as reserving an ex officio position on the committee for a BRAC representative or regularly involving BRAC representatives in committee meetings and recommendations
- » Provide meaningful opportunities for Alumni to engage with members of the current Leadership class
- » Redesign the Alumni Scholarship/Support Fund, including the amount and manner in which we do so – such as enhancing how we structure Leadership scholarships or investing in Leadership programming, including speakers and experiential learning opportunities – thereby continuing to ensure a diverse, strong program

*Baton Rouge Area Leadership is a program of:*



*Last updated: December 2017*

*Created by:*



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