



Bingham  
Fellows

CLASS OF  
2020

# MAKING LOUISVILLE A TOP-TIER CITY



**BINGHAM FELLOWS CLASS OF 2020 IMPACT REPORT**  
FOUR STEPS TO A TOP TIER CITY

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A **TOP-TIER CITY,** AND HOW DO WE GET THERE?

THE BINGHAM FELLOWS CLASS OF 2020 GATHERED TO FOCUS ON THE GOAL OF **MAKING LOUISVILLE A TOP-TIER CITY,** AND ANSWER THE QUESTION – “WHAT MUST BE DIFFERENT FOR US TO GET TO THAT TOP TIER?”

As with every Bingham Fellows class, each of our 42 members came with a passion for creating positive change for our city and its citizens. We also brought a wide range of experience and broad knowledge of our community. The many voices in our class came from different zip codes, industries, and cultures, which allowed for rich dialogue and unique perspectives on what it means to be a top-tier city and how we might get there.

We began our time together in January of 2020 filled with questions on what it means to be a top-tier city and pondered ideas like, “Is it more Fortune 500 headquarters and professional sports teams? More amenities, different cityscapes?”

**After only a short time into our journey, the momentous events of 2020 made us pause.**

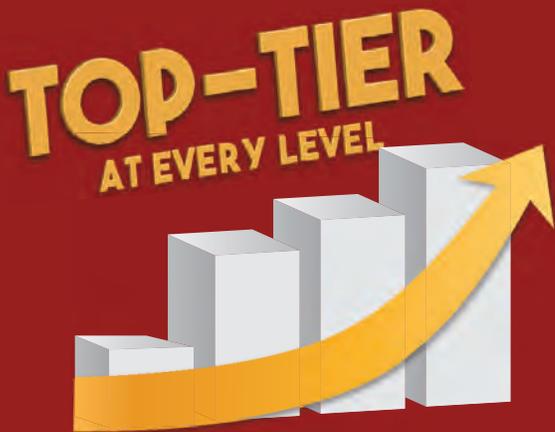
In that pause, we realized that our time together would be different than any of the Bingham Fellows classes that had preceded us. The COVID-19 pandemic had brought much

of our city’s momentum to a screeching halt and the cries for justice laid bare that in our previous pushes forward we had left far too many behind.

The questions then shifted to, “Who needs to be engaged in defining those aspirations and achieving them?” “What policies and practices need to change, for us to get there?”

As we continued down our path of understanding, we individually, and then as group, realized that for Louisville to step up to the next level, we must also lift up those left behind so we can move forward together. We divided into teams to address specific areas of need. As our teams focused and refined our projects, they evolved from ideas that would push us forward to tools that would help us rise together as a stronger and more equitable community.

**To be a top-tier city, we must engage our whole community.**



Our projects reflect our class's commitment to making it possible for us all to rise together. They begin with a focus on connecting all individuals in the digital realm and ensuring equitable resources for small businesses and neighborhoods. To make all of this possible, we also focus on expanding resources by giving citizens the opportunity to decide how we will invest in our community.

**The Bingham Fellows class of 2020 is proud to present the following projects that we hope will empower us to rise together to the next level:**

## **DIGITAL INC(LOU)SION**

### **DIGITAL ACCESS FOR ALL**

Digital Inc(LOU)sion seeks to coordinate and expand the many existing digital inclusion initiatives into one highly functional, solution-oriented digital inclusion coalition. The events of 2020 brought two important truths into stark reality: broadband access is as essential as running water and electricity and many in Louisville lack the broadband access needed to participate fully in society. Several groups in Louisville are attempting to bridge this digital divide as it relates to their own mission. For instance, Jefferson County Public Schools has distributed laptops and set up Wi-Fi hotspots, and private companies have invested in equipment and training for their employees. But these efforts are patchwork at best and, in some cases, serve to highlight the disparate access that many in Louisville have to broadband. Digital Inc(LOU)sion will bring together organizations across the city to attract the financial and other resources needed to implement scalable solutions. The coalition will act as a chorus instead of merely a group of voices, making each group's efforts more impactful for the city as a whole.

## **2 TO 22**

### **EMPOWERING BLACK BUSINESSES**

While Louisville's demographic consists of an African American population of approximately 22%, our makeup of Black business owners is closer to 2%. 2 to 22 was formed to address this key disparity and create a business community that is truly reflective of our city. Through gathering insights from business owners in the community, 2 to 22 identified that there is no lack of great ideas in our city. Roadblocks arise when it comes to "where to go" during critical junctions of business growth. Whether legal support, bookkeeping, or financing, navigating the waters of business development takes resources and connections. There are many people in the Louisville community with both knowledge of the building blocks to success and willingness to help. The key is making the right connections at the right time. Through partnerships with the Black Business Association, Amplify, and many others, 2 to 22 will be a navigator and connector to close our city's business ownership gap.

## **THRIVE IN LOU** **STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS**

A top tier city must have a variety of neighborhoods that support community and provide great places where neighbors can live, work, play, and thrive. Louisville is a quilt of great neighborhoods with unique stories and assets; however, they are not all equally positioned for success. To be a top-tier city Louisville must become a thriving and equitable community, one neighborhood at a time.

To achieve this goal, Thrive in Lou partnered with Center for Neighborhoods to enhance and develop a neighborhood engagement tool based on the neighborhood L.O.V.E. principles of Livability, Opportunity, Vitality and Education. This tool allows neighbors to understand and define their unique story; recognize their assets, and then leverage them to create a strategic path toward being a unique place where everyone can thrive.

## **YOU DECIDE, KENTUCKY!** **RESOURCES IN THE HANDS OF CITIZENS**

You Decide, Kentucky! is a statewide initiative focused on engaging, educating, and galvanizing people and organizations across the Commonwealth to achieve a shared goal: Empowering local governments and citizens to decide what revenue streams will improve the quality of life in their communities.

Doing that requires modernizing the outdated and complex tax code of the Kentucky Constitution, giving authority to the General Assembly to enable revenue-raising options at the county and municipal level. Learning from and building upon previous efforts, You Decide, Kentucky! places a significant focus on creating a strong, multi-partisan coalition of citizens — rural and urban, progressive and conservative, voters and public officials — needed to influence change in Frankfort and positively impact communities around the state.

Our team has formed a 501(c)3 organization, assembled an executive committee, and launched a multi-year campaign to help unlock the capital needed to fund more community-centered, local initiatives across the Commonwealth.

## ABOUT THE BINGHAM FELLOWS

The Bingham Fellows program is the advanced leadership program of the Leadership Louisville Center. Created in 1988 through a \$500,000 endowment from the Mary and Barry Bingham Sr. Fund, the Fellows are social entrepreneurs who have the imagination and talent needed to gather critical resources and create social change. Side by side with peers, participants work to develop dynamic and innovative solutions to our community's most pressing challenges. Now graduating the 28th class, the Bingham Fellows have an impressive track record of providing community issues with visibility and momentum.

The Fellows don't ponder what might be. They roll up their sleeves, shine a spotlight on an issue and put new ideas to work. Their impact includes recent projects such as the West Louisville community development organization OneWest, regular Café Louie conversations with elected officials at Louisville Free Public Library locations, a sustainable model for neighborhood 'Little Free Libraries,' creation of City Champs, a talent attraction and retention program now managed by Greater Louisville Inc., and assistance leading to the opening of the Smoketown Family Wellness Center. The impact of the Fellows goes back to the 1990s with the creation of The Housing Partnership, construction of the Presbyterian Community Center, growth of local farmers' markets, and numerous other positive outcomes.

### 2020 BINGHAM FELLOWS

#### DIGITAL INC(LOU)SION TEAM

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#### THRIVE IN LOU TEAM

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Archdiocese of Louisville

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### 2020 STEERING COMMITTEE

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