



HTXelerator reaches halfway point, announces inaugural cohort of future council members and board/commission members

Boasts comprehensive advisory board, mentor, and speaker list

25 future-focused class members comprise our 2021 Class

HOUSTON, TX, Nov. 1, 2021 – The HTXelerator inaugural cohort is now halfway through the HTXelerator program, set to end on December 15th, 2021. The class is filled with 25 engaged and talented Houstonians from around the city and a variety of backgrounds including technology and real estate professionals, entrepreneurs, educators, and CEOs.

“Despite the uncertainties of the global pandemic which has resulted in the canceling or postponement of many popular events and programs in Houston, interest in the HTXelerator remains high,” said HTXelerator Executive Director Randy Romman. “This is the initial launch of the program and we have a full cohort.”

When the 2021 HTXelerator concludes in mid-December, it will include 25 alumni, advisory members and mentors that include former elected officials, and a one-of-a-kind speaker list from leaders of the public and private sectors.

The HTXelerator, a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the only elected office candidate recruitment engine in Houston. It is designed to identify, mentor and promote the next generation of future-focused leaders interested in public service. The 25 individuals selected for the Class of 2021 have a standout dedication and commitment to the future success of Houston and to serving our community through public service.

The 2021 class includes:

District A:

Leslie Meyer, Tax Manager at DMA - DuCharme, McMillen & Associates, Inc.

District B:

Darryl Blakburn, Petroleum Engineer, Data Analyst, Entrepreneur, Community Advocate

District C:

Andrea Chincuanco, Master of Global Business Administration - Fletcher, The Graduate School of Global Affairs at Tufts University

Nelson Vergel, CEO at DiscountedLabs.com

Paige Powell, Deputy Director, Citizens' Environmental Coalition

Placido Gomez, Education/Non-Profit Consultant

Ronen Melloul-Blanco, Rotational Associate at Entera

Sean Marshall, Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Criterion Energy Partners

Sharon Steinberg, AIA LEED AP, Project Director at Gensler

District D:

Ashlynn Hall, BA Political Science & Government

Bernard Jackson, Creative Producer

Keivan Conley, Property Administrator/Accounting Supervisor at Rice University



District E:

Chazz Bailey, MBA, CSM, ICPC

District H:

Chelsea O'Hara, Program Director at the University of Houston's Hobby School of Public Affairs
David Buehrer, Retail Operator Tuscany Coffee Services

District I:

Dolores Ann Lozano, Entrepreneur, KIPP Texas Board Member, Aspen Ideas Scholar, Impact Hub Houston, Colorwave
J.J. Gonzalez, Real Estate Attorney
Karena Duran, EIT, Civil Engineering Graduate
Katherine Culbert, PE, PMP, Deputy Director, Commission Shift
Kory Haywood, Economic Development Field Representative at U.S. House of Representatives
Samantha Chapa, NSF Graduate Research Fellow, PhD Student in Political Science at University of Houston

District K:

Esmeralda Gutierrez, Director of Corporate Communications and Public Relations at Flexible Consulting LLC

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)

Frederico Martins, Political Scientist / Customer Service Experience
Ryan Kee, Business Development Manager, MVI Construction
Thomas Singleton, Community Development Manager at Vision Galveston

HTXelerator participants receive rigorous training and mentorship by experienced elected officials and community leaders. The 2021 HTXelerator curriculum included more than 30 subject-matter experts including Former Houston Mayor Annise Parker, Founding Director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, Dr. Stephen L. Klineberg Texas, Chief Operating Officer & Deputy City Controller, Alexander W. Obregon, among others. Each class member is also assigned a mentor, typically a current or former elected official or a professional with experience working in and around city council.

The class's opening retreat was held on September 11-12, 2021, and is followed by nine weekly Wednesday sessions taught by experts in the fields of transportation, land use, utilities, economic development, homelessness, diversity and social equity, and a variety of other issues intended to prepare future candidates and city board and commission members. The closing retreat is scheduled to take place in December 2021 on media training, how to run a campaign and class project presentations followed by a pitch-style competition before an expert panel of judges and a public event for nine finalists, the HTXL Games.



About the HTXelerator

The mission of the HTXelerator is to identify and prepare future-focused leaders for public service and educate the community about solutions that will improve Houston's quality of life for generations to come. The program aims to encourage citizens to pursue and prepare for elected office and board/commission service through a technology accelerator model.

The HTXelerator's Advisory Board includes former elected officials Chris Bell, Ellen Cohen, Mike Sullivan and startup incubator entrepreneur Anh Mai.

For more information, visit: www.htxelerator.org.

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THE HTXELERATOR

