

Jeffery Wallace, President & CEO, LeadersUp
Full Bio 2018

To understand Jeffery T.D. Wallace's social impact ideology, picture a high school drum major leading from the front, building a vision, bringing people together and providing direction to achieve dynamic results. Even now, as a Next Gen social entrepreneur intent on bridging the opportunity gap, those guiding principles, along with exposure to diverse cultures and communities in need, have informed Wallace's unique ability to take any social issue and find a sustainable solution.

As president and CEO of LeadersUp, Wallace fulfills the dual roles of visionary and architect, getting in front of the issues that fuel educational and economic inequities, and uniting people around shared goals to achieve disruptive and transformative change. Founded to bridge the divide between the untapped potential of young people and the business challenge of finding and keeping the best talent, LeadersUp has achieved cross-sector victories by identifying common interests, then developing and championing the clear value proposition that united stakeholders offer.

With Wallace, LeadersUp has established best practices by facilitating employer-led solutions that are demand-driven and human-centered to tackle high youth unemployment in Chicago, Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. LeadersUp, through its work-ready skills training and hiring events, has placed more than 5,000 young adults in jobs with advancement potential, with a 60% retention rate.

"We work strategically to bring together businesses and community leaders to pursue mutually beneficial goals while increasing equity," Wallace says. "Matching talent to need and creating pathways to career advancement is how everybody wins."

A native of Richmond, CA, Wallace grew up surrounded by diversity and developed a keen urge to champion youth and stamp out inequity wherever he saw it. At a young age, he wrote a school paper pointing out to administrators that black boys were suspended at six times the rate of white boys. He honed his leadership and public speaking skills as president of the youth ministry at his church, learning to connect and build coalitions.

He continued his music education at the University of California, Los Angeles — where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in education and reaffirmed earlier lessons about inclusion. As one of the only African Americans in the music department and one of fewer than 50 men admitted to the school without an athletic scholarship, Wallace learned through cultural isolation the importance of establishing and advocating for inclusive environments. He became the first undergraduate student conductor in the music department, which created the position when he

demonstrated a desire to become a conductor. Wallace went on to earn a Master of Science degree in Education from the University of California, Los Angeles, and also a Master of Science degree in Organizational Development from the University of California, Berkeley.

Before joining LeadersUp, he championed inclusion to strengthen communities in South L.A. as senior program officer for the Los Angeles Urban League. There, he developed initiatives that enhanced education, public safety, public health and community development for more than 10,000 residents and stakeholders. In 2011, he organized a trip to China for 35 students from Central High School as part of a cultural exchange. Wallace opened their eyes to a larger world, an international economy that lifted their thinking to a global level and simultaneously shined light on the talent in an untapped area of Los Angeles.

His innovative approach to education and workforce initiatives and practices has led to prestigious national recognition: Wallace is a fellow of the Presidio Institute and is a Metropolitan Non-Resident Fellow of the Brookings Institution. In 2017, Wallace was invited to Auckland, New Zealand, to share his best practices solutions to high youth unemployment at a summit convened to tackle similar social inequities in that country.