



Women’s Policy Institute-Local

Class of 2020-21 Fellows

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Alameda County, Community Health

Elizabeth Esparza

Food Justice Community Organizer

HOPE Collaborative, a project of Tides

Pronouns: She/Her

Elizabeth is a Food Justice Community Organizer with HOPE Collaborative in Oakland. She



recently completed her Master's in Public Policy at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where she focused her studies on the food systems and the relationship between food waste and hunger. Elizabeth has spent the past eight years working in food systems, throughout the education, nonprofit, and county public health.

Asia Hampton

Volunteer/Principal

Oakland Food Policy Council/Self-Employed

Pronouns: She/Her



Asia Hampton comes to the table with 9 years of experience working in all areas of the food system to increase equitable access to food and opportunity. Asia is also a Member of the Oakland Food Policy Council actively working on the development of a new organizational structure and the implementation of The Good Food Purchasing Policy within OUSD. Originally from San Diego, Asia moved up the California coast to attend UC Santa Barbara where she earned a B.A. in Sociology. She traded in warm beaches for long bridges when she moved to Oakland in 2012 and traded moderate weather for four seasons with a brief stint in New York while she worked on her Master's in Food Systems at NYU. She now happily lives in Oakland with her partner and dog, making frequent trips out of town to maintain the amazing friendships she's made along the way.

Nakia Woods
Project Director
HOPE Collaborative, a project of Tides
Pronouns: She/Her; They/Them



Nakia Woods is the Project Director for HOPE Collaborative. Prior working with HOPE, Nakia was a Legal Organizer with the Black Alliance for Just Immigration and focused on meeting the immediate needs of Black immigrants at risk of deportation via organizing, advocacy, and providing culturally competent immigrant support services. A San Diego native, Nakia has been thriving in the Bay area for the past 9 Years. In their spare time, they love to take care of their plant babies (Lily and Harry Potter), interact with all things Harry Potter (peep the shirt y'all I think they may be a little obsessed), and constantly change their social media accounts from private to public.

Monterey County, Community Health

Marie Alonzo

Masters in Social Work Student

California State University, Monterey Bay

Pronouns: She/her



Marie is a Masters in Social Work student at CSU, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). She received her Bachelor's degree in Collaborative Health and Human Services with a Social Work concentration at CSUMB. Marie also minored in Psychology and Spanish during her undergraduate career. She is currently part of the Committee on Inclusiveness and Social Equity for the College of Health Sciences and Human Services and the Inter-Club Council Representative for the Master in Social Work Student Association at CSUMB. She is a board member for the Monterey County Health Department Clinic Services. Marie is passionate about making sure that all children get the best childhood education early on in their lives. She believes that there should be more of a focus and investment in children at a young age.

Marquise Davis

Child Development Specialist

Young Women's Christian Association Monterey County

Pronouns: She/Her



Marquise Davis is the Learning and Development Manager for the YWCA Monterey County. She is a new resident of California, originally from Birmingham, AL but most recently from Houston, TX. For most of her professional career, she has served as an early childhood professional in both teaching and administrative capacities. She has a BS in Early Childhood Education from the University of Alabama and an MS in Psychology with a concentration in Child and Adolescent Development from Capella University. She is currently a member of the Early Childhood Development Advisory Group with Bright Beginnings and regularly meetings for the Local Child Care Planning Council and the Monterey County Children's Council.

Iris Gamez

Communications & Community Engagement Coordinator

Bright Beginnings

Pronouns: She/Her



Iris is the Communications and Community Engagement Coordinator at Bright Beginnings, Early Childhood Development Initiative. Her educational and professional background includes business, marketing, communications and strategic planning. She has a Bachelor's in Business Marketing and a Master of Business Administration from California State University, Monterey Bay. Having worked at The First Tee of Monterey County and Hartnell College, Iris has developed many connections in Monterey County.

Born and raised in the Salinas Valley, she has a strong commitment to the success of the Salinas Valley community and the children it serves. At Bright Beginnings, her role is to support communications and support all projects that include community leadership and co-creation of solutions as programs are being designed, implemented and evaluated to ensure they are effective in meeting their needs and are sustained as it relates to reducing the gaps in kindergarten readiness between children in low-income households and children in non-low-income households.

Daisy Hernandez

Friends, Family and Neighbors Educator

Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo

Pronouns: She/Her



Daisy Hernandez is the Friends, Family and Neighbors Educator for Community Action Partnerships of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO), with knowledge in Best Practices in Early Child Development. Daisy is part of the Central Coast Childhood Advocacy Network and is currently receiving training in Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health for the year of 2019-2020. Daisy received an Associate of Science in Child Development and Family Relations from Bakersfield Community College, and a Bachelor's in Liberal Studies with a Health and Wellness Minor from California State University Monterey Bay.

Los Angeles, Criminal Justice Reform

Rocio Herrera

Director of Programs

[Helpline Youth Counseling Inc.](#)

Pronouns: She/Her



Rocio Herrera is the Director of Programs at Helpline Youth Counseling, a non-profit which serves the at-risk youth and families in Southeast Los Angeles County. Rocio is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and holds a B.A. in Criminal Justice and an M.A. in Marriage and Family Child Therapy. After graduation, Rocio first pursued her career as a Deputy Juvenile Correctional Officer with the Orange County Probation Department. That eventually led to Rocio providing clinical field-based services and holding various leadership positions, including Director of Programs at Helpline Youth Counseling. Rocio is committed to reducing abuse and trauma, strengthening families, eliminating barriers, and enhancing resiliency. Having been mentored and coached by other well-respected leaders, Rocio has made a high-level commitment to the growth of other leaders and staff who cultivate the same passion and values to serve others in the community.

Alicia Martinez-Vargas

Health Educator

[Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#)

Pronouns: She/Her



Alicia Martinez-Vargas is a Health Educator for Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, with expertise in community health education, community collaboration, and program planning and implementation. Alicia's work includes collaboration with community-based organizations and community members to address environmental, social, and systemic factors affecting educational attainment of youth, developing and implementing lead contamination and prevention programs, and chronic disease education. Prior to her current role Alicia was a Public Health Investigator for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, where she implemented public health prevention programs through disease investigation and prevention methods, primarily among youth, Latinx, and LGBTQ communities. Alicia received her master's in public health with an emphasis in Community Health Education from San Jose State University and her bachelor's in biotechnology from California State Polytechnic Pomona.

Cecilia Reyes
Community Engagement Specialist
Whittier Area First Day Coalition

Pronouns: She/Her



Cecilia Gomez Reyes is the Community Engagement Specialist at the Whittier Area First Day Coalition (First Day). Cecilia has over a decade of experience working for the government and the private sector. Cecilia's responsibilities at First Day include managing community engagement activities, providing advice on industry best practices for communications, social network management, government relations, and administering the volunteer program.

Her experience includes, Assistant Public Information Officer at the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RRCC); Community Field Organizer for California Democratic Party; and Government Relations at UC Santa Barbara. Cecilia is skilled in Spanish language media and has been a spokesperson for government agencies, community-based organizations, and political candidates on various news related issues. During the 2010 Election cycle, she managed the East Los Angeles field office for the Democratic Party Coordinated Campaign. While at the LA County RRCC, she prepared for the 2016 Presidential Election by developing plans to increase voter engagement projects and managed a \$750,000 paid media budget for outreach efforts.

Samantha Ruiz
Community Outreach Coordinator
El Monte Promise Foundation
Pronouns: She/Her



Samantha (Sam) Ruiz is passionate about mobilizing communities of color to address the inequities reflective of the sociopolitical determinants of health. She has 5+ years' experience in equity-orientated work, most of which is centered in youth development and college access. As the Community Outreach Coordinator for El Monte Promise Foundation, Sam facilitates relationships and partnerships with community members, community partners, educational institutions and stakeholders to support the organization's work in educational equity. Sam is a proud first-generation Latina college

graduate currently pursuing her Master in Public Health degree at California State University, Long Beach; she holds a B.A. in Human Biology with a focus in Cross-Cultural Health and Healing from Pitzer College and has a research background in traditional medicine. She plans to start her career in youth impacting policy because she believes that community wellbeing is inextricably tied to policy work.

San Bernardino, Community Health

Kimberly Calvin

Pronouns: She/Her

Executive Director

Akoma Unity Center



Kimberly Calvin is a Homeless Community Liaison, Property Manager, Small Business owner, and Co-Creator/Director of Akoma Unity Center, a thriving non-profit serving families of San Bernardino City Unified School District. Recently elected San Bernardino Ward 6 City Councilwoman, Kimberly is dedicated to working with community members to build a sustainable and productive city. Kimberly has worked together with other community members to re-establish the Shirrell's Neighborhood Association, of which she is the President. Recognized by the League of Women Voters as a Citizen of

Achievement, Assembly member Eloise Reyes as a Community Champion and 2019 Woman of the Year nominee, recognized by the Inland Empire Labor Council, recipient of the World Day of Service Award, and other organizations for faithful service. Calvin has four children and four grandchildren though she is considered "Mama Kim" to so many in the Community.

Rosa Cendejas

Volunteer

Mecha de SBVC

Pronouns: They/Them



Rosa Cendejas is a sophomore at San Bernardino Valley College. They are majoring in Psychology with a minor in American Sign Language. They are also the first student to be elected as a non-binary co-chair for M.E.Ch.A de SBVC which is a Chicax Student Organization. Rosa has been an active member and leader for the last two years organizing community and student events including: Cesar Chavez Memorial Dinner, Police Brutality Awareness Day, Social Justice Month for Chicano Speaker Series, Indigenous Peoples Day, Dia De Los Niños with the SBVC Child

Development Center and various other projects that serve the community and youth. Rosa is also an active youth leader with ChICCCAA in San Bernardino as a part of the Community Sustainability Co-op where she assists implementing a free thrift store for the neediest folks in the community and has also led late night feedings for houseless community members.

Alejandra Rishton

Self-employed

CHICCCAA Village and Family Co-op

Pronouns: They/Them



Alejandra is a non-binary parent, educator, and home schooling advocate. Expertise in Radical Parenting including decolonizing parenting practices and child rearing through inclusive healing practices that center the child through positive attachment and bonding methods. Strong interest in creating child inclusive safe spaces for families and communities with a focus on interaction with nature, including plants, animals and the environment as a whole. Highly skilled at interacting with youth from multiple age groups and backgrounds with science based, culturally competent and gender/ability inclusive programming. Experienced in local movement building with parents, teachers, care-givers and others who care about young children, youth and young adults or new parents.

Miranda Sheffield

Self Employed

Pronouns: She/Her



Miranda is a Mama, community organizer and scholar. She is currently a local candidate for Pomona City Council. Miranda is a grassroots organizer pushing for stronger rent control, social equity and racial justice. In 2019, Miranda received her Masters degree in Human Rights Law at SOAS University of London in 2019, after receiving her degree in London, Miranda returned to her hometown Pomona, CA with the intention of running for local office as a progressive candidate. Miranda supports the solidarity economy and believes in a just future to support marginalized communities.

Mary Valdemar

SBVC Library Secretary

San Bernardino Valley College & San Bernardino Community College District

Pronouns: She/Her



Mary Valdemar has been an advocate in Inland region for over 20 years. Her passion for advocacy started as a struggling student, single mother, Chicana feminist and environmental advocate at SBVC & has continued throughout her over 15 year career there. She currently serves the campus through several organizations focused on diversity, inclusion, equity and labor. She is the Co-Chair of the Ethnic Studies Inland Empire Coalition; Co-Founder/Lead Organizer for ChICCCAA the only grassroots service cooperative in the IE, Village and Child Co-Op.

She is as a delegate for the Inland Empire Labor Council, the AB617 steering committee and the Policy 47 committee for environmental justice fighting for clean air, land and water with ASM Reyes. She has a strong commitment to innovating, developing and implementing alternative solutions to our communities' struggles with a perspective rooted in Indigenous practices, dismantling systems that perpetuate oppression and creating autonomous thriving communities that honor all beings, including Mother Earth.

San Francisco, Community Health

Zizi Bandera

Program Manager

Equality California Institute

Pronouns: They/Them



Zizi Bandera is a queer, nonbinary, proud child of immigrants. Zizi is a Program Manager at Equality California Institute, responsible for the organization's LGBTQ+ immigrant rights advocacy and public health program. Zizi brings over eight years of experience in organizing, movement building, and political advocacy at Equality California Institute, Immigration Advocates Network, and the

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of LA. Zizi currently serves on the Board of Directors of Somos Familia, a Bay-Area organization of Latinx families fighting for LGBTQ+ rights. Zizi is deeply invested in immigrant families and believes they are the catalysts for radical and long-term healing for our LGBTQ+ community. Zizi holds a Master's in Public Policy from Mills College and a B.A. in Economics with a Minor in International Relations from the University of California, Riverside.

Pau Crego

Deputy Director - Policy and Programs

Office of Transgender Initiatives, City and County of San Francisco

Pronouns: They/Them, He/Him



Pau Crego brings over a decade of experience working in community organizing, policy advocacy, and social services locally and internationally. In his current role as the Deputy Director and Director of Policy and Programs at the Office of Transgender Initiatives (City and County of San Francisco), Pau advocates for and implements policies to make SF safer for LGBTQ+ communities. Pau is also a health education instructor

at City College of San Francisco, and a published author and translator in the fields of transgender advocacy, gender diversity and public health.

Jackson James “JM” Jaffe

Founder, Consultant

Trans Health Consulting, LLC

Pronouns: They/Them



After 8 years at Lyon-Martin Health Services, JM created Trans Health Consulting to improve access to trans healthcare nationally through provider education, technical assistance, policy advocacy and direct services. JM was first to obtain Medicaid coverage of many different gender affirming surgeries in the US, slowly changing the landscape of access nationally through case appeals and policy advocacy. They have obtained insurance coverage of over 750 gender affirming surgeries over the past decade. As a consultant, JM

educates health professionals, helping to implement organization-wide trans care integration. They manage TransLine, a clinical support e-consultation service and published the TransLine Hormone Therapy Prescriber Guidelines in collaboration with over 20 trans health experts. JM is a co-chair of the National LGBT Primary Care Alliance and a member of SF's Office of Trans Initiatives' Trans Advisory Committee. They serve as Board Secretary of St. James Infirmary and Board Lead of OurTransHomeSF.

G. Gabriela Rossi

Health Right 360

RN Manager

Pronouns: She, Her



Gabriela Rossi brings over 8 years of experience working in queer and trans community health within critical safety-net programs. She has worked in HIV+ adult foster care, emergency shelter, county and non-profit managed trans-health clinics, as well as bed-side nursing for post-operative gender-affirming surgeries. Her advocacy work includes successfully organizing for single-adult shelters in Minneapolis, MN to house trans residents in gender-segregated shelter spaces that align with gender identity, rather than sex assigned at birth. She also advocated for the inclusion of trans-health curriculum within her Master of

Nursing program at the University of Minnesota, leading to course content changes for future generations of nurses. Gabriela holds a BA in English and Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies, a Masters in Nursing and is a licensed RN. She is currently RN Manager at Lyon-Martin Health Services, a world-renown non-profit Federally Qualified Health Center providing full-scope queer and trans-competent primary care.