

Women's Policy Institute-Local  
Class of 2018-19

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## Alameda County, Economic Justice Team

### Ayana Ivery

Digital Marketing & Communications Manager

[Impact Hub](#)

Pronouns: she, hers and they, theirs



Ayana Dionne Ivery is a Graphic Designer and has been creating multi-media art since 2003, professionally since 2005. Born March 23, 1981 in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, she knew from an early age that she enjoyed creating with her hands. Having lived in Aix-en-Provence, France; South Beach, Florida; Denver, Colorado and the Bay Area in California have all added influence to her creative endeavors. Graduating with a Bachelors of Science in Fashion Design and Merchandising, minors in International Business and Marketing, Ayana also studied African Art and History and speaks fluent French. She is a member of the Black Woman is God artist collective and serves on the planning committee for Breaking the Silence for Women and Girls of Color.

### RocQuel Johnson

Branch Chief, Public Affairs Office

[State of California, Department of Transportation](#)

Pronouns: She, hers



RocQuel Johnson is a Branch Chief in the Public Affairs Office for The State of California, Caltrans in the Bay Area. She advocates for Black women and girls within ALL spaces so that their voices can be heard through her nonprofit At The Red Door. RocQuel is a parent/guardian leader within Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), serving as a lead delegate for the Local Control Accountability Plan and Parent & Student Advisory Committee. She also is a member of OUSD Foster Youth Advisory Committee. RocQuel is working to complete her MS in Leadership with an emphasis in Social Justice from St Mary's College in Moraga, and she has a BS in Business Management from California State University, Fresno.

## Arianna Morales

Program Manager

[Marcus Foster Education Institute](#)

Pronouns: She, hers



Arianna Morales is a Program Manager at the Marcus Foster Education Institute (MFEI) in Oakland, California. At MFEI, she spearheads the work of two of the organization's collaborative initiatives: the East Bay College Access Network and W+P=X. She also shepherds the organization's scholarship program and leads various technical assistance partnerships for equitable systems change in public education. She is a core member of the Bay Area Breaking the Silence Planning Committee, and has previously sat on the planning committee for the UC Berkeley Empowering Women of Color

Conference. Arianna holds a Bachelor's degree in International Studies from Vassar College and a Master's degree in Social and Cultural Studies in Education from UC Berkeley.

## Alameda County, Environmental Justice Team

### Sarah Diring

Senior Researcher  
[Pacific Institute](#)  
Pronouns: she, hers



Sarah Diring is a Senior Researcher at the Pacific Institute, a non-profit water research institute based in Oakland, California. Her research focuses on innovative and effective solutions to local, national, and global water challenges, from stormwater capture to cost-sharing opportunities in water management. Prior to joining the Pacific Institute, Sarah completed her doctoral degree at Duke University, where her research focused on the impacts of artisanal and small-scale gold mining on river ecosystems and community health in Peru. Sarah holds a Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Duke University and a B.S. in Environmental Science with a minor in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences from University of California, Los Angeles.

### Nahal Ghoghaie

Bay Area Program Manager  
[The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water](#)  
Pronouns: She, hers



Nahal Ghoghaie is the Bay Area Program Manager for The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, where she manages the Bay Area's Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program; engaging underrepresented residents in regional water planning and policy. Nahal also serves on a list of water-related decision making bodies, contributing to cross-disciplinary collaborative water management and regional policy efforts. Nahal is based in Berkeley, and is conversant in Spanish and Farsi. She completed her Master's Degree in Environmental Studies at the Evergreen State College, where she focused on Tribally led watershed management. Nahal also has a Bachelor's in English, with a minor in Environmental Science from the University of Texas, Austin. She has worked in collaborative

resource management, environmental education and outreach, and disaster preparedness for nearly a decade.

## Britton Schwartz

Bay Area Program Director  
[The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water](#)  
Pronouns: she, hers



Britton Schwartz is the Bay Area Program Director for The Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, with expertise in the areas of environmental justice, community-driven policy reform, human rights law, and local implementation of human rights norms. Britton is a member of the California State Bar, serves as the co-chair of the National Coalition on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation, and has more than five years of experience as a supervisor in law school clinics. Britton received a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, a MA from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and a BA in English Literature from Columbia University.

## Los Angeles County, Criminal Justice Team

### Ivette Alé

Statewide Co-Coordinator

[Californians United for a Responsible Budget](#)

Pronouns – she, hers and they, their



Ivette Alé is the Statewide Co-Coordinator for Californians United for a Responsible Budget where she applies her expertise in media and communications, development, budget analysis and grassroots organizing to fight prison and jail expansion. Ivette's intersectional approach to movement building is evident in the breadth and scope of her work. In 2010, Ivette co-founded Azucar, an incubator for QTPOC artists and fundraising platform for LGBTQ and immigrant rights organizations. She currently serves on the board of Voices Neighborhood Council, as a Budget Advocate representing District 9 and on St. John's Well Child & Family Center Transgender Right to Health Committee. Ivette is a

graduate of the University of California, Berkeley with a BA in Political Science, a Justice Policy Network Fellow and UCLA Law Fellow.

### Patricia Guerra

Director of Organizing  
[Community Coalition](#)

Pronouns: she, hers



Patricia Guerra is the Director of Organizing with Community Coalition. As a native of South Los Angeles, she witnessed first-hand how the "War on Drugs" and decades of disinvestment tore down the social fabric of her family and community. She is committed to developing the leadership, knowledge and skills of South LA residents to identify community-based solutions that address the root causes of crime and poverty. Her work is centered on grassroots organizing and the development of campaign policies that promote criminal justice reform and rebuilding the social safety net. Patricia received a Bachelors in Gender, Ethnic

and Women's Studies from the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and a Masters in Social Work from the University of Southern California.

## Melanie Mendoza

Senior Account Executive

M Strategic Communications

Pronouns: she, hers and they, theirs



Melanie Mendoza serves as a Senior Account Executive where she services clients by executing political, communications and urban planning strategies. Melanie brings experience in both non-profit and real estate management to M Strategic Communications and has successfully campaigned for the passage of Prop 56, secured significant media coverage and measurable increases in social media engagement for the firm's diverse client base. Prior to working for M Strategic Communications, Melanie held various roles in the non-profit sector, including serving as a Youth Minister and Program Administrator for Millennium Momentum Foundation. Melanie graduated with a BA in Urban Studies and a minor in Sociology from Loyola Marymount University.

## Monterey County, Health Team

### Alma Cervantes

Education Equity Coordinator and Organizer  
[Building Healthy Communities- East Salinas](#)  
Pronouns: Alma, she, hers, and they, theirs



Alma was born in Salinas, CA and was raised by a single mother in East Salinas. She is the first of her 9 siblings to obtain a higher education. She received her Bachelors in World Languages and Culture at Cal State Monterey Bay and her Masters degree in Mexican American Studies with an emphasis on Policy and Education at San Jose University. Her passion in education and her belief in authentically engaging resident to use their voice and power to transform their community stems from her own personal experience and involvement in various institutions. She leads the Education Equity Action Team for East Salinas Building Healthy Communities, with expertise in community engagement, grassroots organizing, and culturally rooted healing informed practices.

### Alma Loredo

Parent Organizer  
[Building Health Communities - East Salinas](#)  
Pronouns She, hers



Alma Loredo, was born in San Luis Potosi, Mexico, and she has lived in the city of Salinas for 13 years. She's a wife and mother of 3 children who are her inspiration to achieve her goals. She has always enjoyed being involved in their education. Through that journey, she encountered many obstacles including not knowing how to navigate the school system in this country. Through these obstacles she discovered her passion: advocating for children and young people in their education and socio-emotional health through collective ideas and action. For the last 2 years she's been part of a committee called Padres Unidos, under the Building Healthy Communities initiative of the California Endowment in East Salinas. Their vision is to transform the school system into a healthy and equitable place through the parents' leadership. Padres Unidos uses the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) to advocate and empower parents.

## Fernanda E. Ocaña

Community Safety Program Coordinator

[City of Salinas](#)

Pronouns: She / Hers



Fernanda is the Community Safety Program Coordinator for the City of Salinas. Fernanda implements the Community Leadership Academy and Youth Leadership Academy for Salinas' residents, of all backgrounds with the intent to increase community's civic engagement and leadership skills. As part of her work with the City of Salinas, Fernanda supports different initiatives, such as; the Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP), Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE), the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Bright Beginnings. Prior to her work with the city, Fernanda worked with different non-profits, interned with Building Healthy Communities, East Salinas and co-founded The Epicenter. Fernanda grew up in Salinas, after migrating from Michoacán, Mexico in 1995. Her love for the Salinas'

community, people and culture has inspired Fernanda to work towards a healthier community and looks forward to the future of her community.

## San Bernardino County, Environmental Justice Team

### Ericka Flores

Senior Community Organizer

[Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice \(CCA EJ\)](#)

She, hers



Ericka is a Senior Community Organizer with the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice. She works alongside community leaders to help tackle various injustices affecting the most vulnerable and disenfranchised living within the Inland region, and has spearheaded a multitude of campaigns in order to promote social equity.

Ericka is a proud DACA recipient and an alumna of San Bernardino Valley College and holds a BA in Sociology from California State University, San Bernardino. She is passionate about the intersectionality of social justice issues— particularly those centered on environmental justice, economic justice, migrants' and women's rights. She is a true believer in celebrating life, but most importantly, she believes in celebrating women.

### Andrea Vidaurre

Community Organizer & Policy Intern

[Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice \(CCA EJ\)](#)

Pronouns: She, hers



Andrea Vidaurre is a recent graduate from the University of California, Riverside where she obtained her bachelor's degree in Global Studies. During her formative years in college she was involved in public health projects and food accessibility issues on her campus. These experiences advocating for a better quality of life in her community, led her to her current position as a community organizer and policy intern with the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice. Andrea also serves as a project manager for the Mexican and Central American Refugee Project, is a member of the Inland Coalition for Equity and Prosperity and is a member of GreenLatinos. She brings extensive research experience and passion for transnational social justice.

## Angelica Balderas

Organizer & Representative

[Sierra Club](#)

Pronouns: She, hers



Angelica, a long-time resident of San Bernardino, currently serves as an Organizer and Representative for the Sierra Club. Angelica is also an organizer and board member for the Inland Region Equality Network (IREN), a non-profit social justice advocacy organization. Angelica has worked as an organizer for UFCW local 1167 on labor issues. During her time at Cal State Northridge and San Bernardino Valley College, she served on student government to push many social justice issues. Angelica has found that being exposed to these issues that plague communities is something that drives her to become more knowledgeable. As an activist and organizer, dealing with LGBTQ, education, and labor among other social justice groups for over twenty plus years, she feels that there is still

much to learn and lots of opportunities to grow. Angelica is looking forward to expanding her horizons by continuing to be involved in numerous organizations in order to help her community as recently named Woman of the Year for California's 61st Assembly District.

## Santa Cruz County, Economic Justice Team

### Maria Cadenas

Executive Director  
[Santa Cruz Community Ventures](#)  
Pronouns: she, hers



Maria Cadenas is the Executive Director of Santa Cruz Community Ventures, where she focuses on creating compassionate and equitable local economies that contribute to the region's well being. She is experienced in strategy development, community relations, program development, and organizational change. Her work has spanned local and global efforts in various fields including Agriculture, Tech, Nonprofits, and Philanthropy with a focus on Latino, LGBTQ, and Immigrant communities. She is a Board Member for the California Board of Podiatric Medicine for the Department of Consumer Affairs, Kitchen Table Advisors, and New Way Homes. Maria hosts radio shows featuring music by women on KZSC 88.1 FM and Radio Bilingue's KHDC 90.9 FM. She received her MBA from Alverno College and BA in Creative Writing and Business Administration from Beloit College.

### Laura Segura

Executive Director  
[Monarch Services – Servicios Monarca](#)  
Pronouns: she, hers



Laura Segura is Executive Director of Monarch Services-Servicios Monarca in Santa Cruz County, a domestic violence, rape crisis, and human trafficking center. Laura has extensive experience in executive leadership and public policy and serves on numerous policy boards, both locally and statewide, ranging in issues from land use to gender equity. She is a former Fellow with the Women's Policy Institute Class of 2013 where she helped shape and successfully pass legislation to protect survivors of violence. Laura earned a BA from San José State University and completed an executive program at Harvard. Laura is a proud immigrant who lives on the coast with her two daughters, loves to run on the beaches, and is a fashion junkie.

## Paulina Moreno

Project Director, Thriving Immigrants Collaborative (TIC)

Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.

Pronouns: She, hers



Paulina Moreno is the Project Director of the Thriving Immigrants Collaborative (TIC) a new county wide initiative responsible for providing leadership and developing a holistic support system that includes crisis response and ongoing services that support immigrants in Santa Cruz County. She is a first generation immigrant born in Michoacán, Mexico and raised in Coachella, CA. Paulina was the DACA Services Coordinator at Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County's Immigration Project where she supervised and coordinated assistance related to DACA and other immigration relief benefits. Paulina partnered with school district staff, admin, and parents to develop and strengthen systems that support the academic success of undocumented students. She

was instrumental in successfully leading the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) recognition and accreditation process for CAB with the U.S. Department of Justice. Paulina has a Master's in Policy, Organization, and Leadership Studies from Stanford University and an M.A. in Education from UC Santa Cruz.