

Women's Policy Institute-Local
Class of 2019-20

Table of Contents

Alameda County, Criminal Justice Team.....	2
Asia Alman	2
Haleema Bharoocha	2
Jessica Iñiguez	3
Aurielle Lucier	3
Fresno County, Health Justice Team.....	4
Erica Martinez	4
Kimberly McCoy.....	4
Olga Nuñez	5
Martha Zarate.....	5
Inland Empire, Environmental Justice Team.....	6
Marisol Hill	6
Marisela Magaña	6
Gracie Torres	7
Priya Vedula	7
Los Angeles County, Health Justice Team	8
Raena Granberry	8
Adjoa Jones	8
Diamond Lee, MSW	9
Stella Rae Simon	9
Monterey County, Economic Justice Team	10
Sonja Koehler.....	10
Maria Carmen Parra	10
Norma Horton Varillas.....	11

Alameda County, Criminal Justice Team

Asia Alman

Health Equity Fellow

[The Greenlining Institute](#)

Pronouns: she, her and they, theirs



Asia is a queer, Caribbean-American organizer and advocate from Brooklyn, New York who believes that systems change work is justice in action. For the last 5 years, Asia has worked to address the impact of racial violence and gender discrimination on citizen and non-citizen Black women and girls domestically and abroad. In her current role as The Greenlining Institute Health Equity Fellow, Asia is coalition-building across California to create Greenlining's first comprehensive Girls and Women of Color state policy agenda to create ladders of opportunity and wellness for girls and women of color to thrive. In addition, Asia is on the African American Action

Team for the Alameda County Everyone Counts Campaign, an initiative to reduce mental health stigma in the Black community. Asia is a 2017 Thomas J. Watson Fellowship Alum and holds a BA in Political Science and Africana Studies, with honors from Vassar College.

Haleema Bharoocha

Branch Tech Equity Fellow

[The Greenlining Institute](#)

Pronouns: She, hers



Haleema is a policy advocate and organizer, driven by her commitment to the collective liberation of all people. She regularly facilitates trainings for advocates on Islamophobia, racial equity, and gender justice and has trained over 500 people. Haleema is the Tech Equity Fellow at Greenlining where she works to increase home internet for communities of color and address algorithmic bias. Haleema also serves as the Bay Area Director of Malikah, a nonprofit that builds safety and power for all women and as an organizer for AAPI Women Lead, which aims to strengthen the leadership of AAPI women to end the intersections of violence against and within AAPI communities.

Haleema studied Sociology at Seattle University, where she founded the Gender Justice Center, a student-led center serving queer, trans*, and female-identifying students. Her views have been shared in Teen Vogue, The Seattle Times, and other media.

Jessica Iñiguez

Bay Area Trauma Informed Organizer

[Malikah](#)

Pronouns: She, hers, ella



Jessica Iñiguez grew up in an immigrant single parent household in South Central Los Angeles. Her Mexican descent and her parents' migration narratives have impacted the way in which she interacts and perceives the world and its social structures. As a child she assumed that the only way to live life was through a suffering and survival model, as those in her community often were oppressed, ignored, and abused. The lack of autonomy that she witnessed ignited her path towards creating liberating and embracing spaces. Jessica has since then centered her life in helping others unpack their intergenerational trauma and heal through her organizing, research, advocacy, and legal/policy work. Jessica is skilled in curriculum writing, narrative building, strategic planning and facilitating trainings on trauma

informed care. Jessica is the Bay Area Trauma Informed Organizer for Malikah, a grassroots organization centered on eradicating gender-violence. Jessica is also an Energy Equity Fellow at the Greenlining Institute. In this position, she works in coalition with legislators and energy commissions to advocate for clean energy initiatives in historically redlined communities of color. Jessica holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in Social Welfare and a Minor in Education from the University of California Berkeley.

Aurielle Lucier

Program Manager, Leadership and Advocacy

[Young Women's Freedom Center](#)

Pronouns: she, hers and they, theirs



Aurielle is a poet, activist, and organizer with nearly 5 years experience in racial justice organizing at the ground level, to decriminalize Black youth in the US South and demilitarize local and regional police forces. As the Program Manager of Leadership and Advocacy at the Young Women's Freedom Center, she leads the expansion of community-led advocacy for young women, girls, and transgender and gender non-conforming folk of color to decarcerate our most vulnerable demographics in the East Bay. Aurielle's articles

and poems concerning racial justice and political change have been featured in Allure Magazine, ESSENCE, and Scalawag, in BOAAT Press, Black Warrior Review, and on NBC Black. Her first collection of creative works approaching topics of Blackness, queerness, and mass incarceration, publishes this fall from Write Bloody Publishing..

Fresno County, Health Justice Team

Erica Martinez

Recruitment and Retention Specialist
[Central Valley Health Policy Institute for Group Prenatal Care](#)
Pronouns: she, hers



Erica Martinez is currently a Recruitment and Retention Specialist at the Central Valley Health Policy Institute for Group Prenatal Care. She is also a co-chair for PTBi Fresno Coordination of Care working group. Erica has been involved in the nonprofit world for 10 years now. In that time, she has had an opportunity to witness first hand many of the struggles that people in her community face. It is through that experience that she has developed a passion to make a difference by serving those people in her community. She feels that it is our responsibility to help those in need in whatever way we can. There are many programs and resources out there but many times people are not aware of them or they are not easily accessible to those people.

Erica believes that if we bridge that gap and give people the proper education and “extra push,” then real difference in our communities can come about.

Kimberly McCoy

Project Director
[Fresno Building Healthy Communities](#)
Pronouns: She, hers



Kimberly McCoy is the Project Director for Fresno Building Healthy Communities, with expertise in Civic Engagement Programs. Kimberly has been a part of the Fresno Building Healthy Communities coalition for more than five years. Starting as a canvasser and then a civic engagement lead, Kimberly has played a pivotal role in local advocacy campaigns pushing for a General Plan update inclusive of community voice with investment in Fresno's underserved communities, as well as leading grassroots engagement efforts around the Southwest Fresno Specific Plan, Transformative Climate Community, AB617 Community Air Protection Program and Measure P.

Olga Nuñez

Community Engagement Coordinator
[Fresno County Preterm Birth Initiative](#)
Pronouns: she, hers



Olga Nuñez is the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Fresno County Preterm Birth Initiative. With over 15 years of community engagement experience, Olga has been instrumental in building and maintaining relationships with numerous stakeholders. Previously, Olga was the Executive Director for the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). Under her dynamic and passionate leadership PIQE's services were taken to all Central Valley rural school districts. Ms. Nuñez participated in the California Chronic Absence Network, serves as chair of the Central Valley Latino Giving Circle, sits on several nonprofit boards and is a proud member of The Light of the World church. Ms. Nuñez graduated with a B.A. in psychology from California State University, Fresno where she was captain of the cross-country team and awarded Cross-Country Female Athlete of the Decade.

Martha Zarate

Health Advocate and DOJ Partial Accredited Representative
[California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation \(Fresno\)](#)
Pronouns: she, hers



Martha Zarate is a Health Advocate and Department of Justice Partial Accredited Representative for California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (CRLAF). She was born in Putla, Oaxaca, Mexico and immigrated at the age of 6 to Fresno California. She is a daughter of immigrant parents and first generation college graduate; she holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work with a minor in Gerontology from CSU Fresno, and a Paralegal certificate through CSU Dominguez Hills. She currently manages the water project in Cantua/El Porvenir, contributes to CRLAF's Health-4-All efforts, and provides pro bono application assistance to Naturalization/DACA renewal applicants. She is the secretary for the Guelaguetza planning committee and a proud Fresnan.

Inland Empire, Environmental Justice Team

Marisol Hill

Domestic Violence Advocate
[Option House, Inc.](#)
Pronouns: She, hers



Marisol Hill has 14 years of management experience in social services with the County of San Bernardino. Before her departure with the County of San Bernardino, she helped eliminate barriers to aged and persons with disabilities who needed support services to live independently and with dignity in the community. In addition, she developed training curriculums that improved the quality of care to aged and persons with disabilities throughout the county. Now, Marisol is a transformational speaker and inspires others to reveal their gifts and talents to the world. She encourages others to dust off their dormant dreams and empowers her audiences to walk with faith and not by fear. She believes it is important to give back to her community and currently volunteers at

Option House. As a domestic violence advocate, she facilitates domestic violence classes that focus on educating and empowering victims to make positive change within their lives.

Marisela Magaña

Mayor Pro Tem
[City of Perris](#)
Pronouns: She, hers



Marisela Magaña has dedicated her career to advocating for children and families in the Perris Valley. She serves as a public school teacher for the Val Verde Unified School District. She has served as a Social Worker for a nonprofit, Health Educator for a USDA grant program, and as Senior Field Representative for Congressman Mark Takano. Marisela was elected by the residents of the City of Perris to represent them on City Council. Since her appointment on December 11th 2018, she has been appointed by council as Mayor Pro Tem. Marisela is working tirelessly to improve the lives of working-class families and ensure that Perris is a safe, transparent, and prosperous community for all.

Gracie Torres

Board Member

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

Pronouns: She, hers



With a career devoted to protecting and conserving our water resources, Gracie Torres joins Western Municipal Water District as its newest elected member. She represents Division 2, which includes the city of Riverside. Director Torres is a longtime Riverside resident and a proud graduate of Riverside Poly High School as well as Riverside Community College. Her passion for water quality developed when she earned her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry/Biochemistry and Master's in Earth and Environmental Sciences from Cal State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). Director Torres teaches chemistry at CSUSB and is a planner for Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Her daily tasks consist of focusing on water quality, stormwater management, and compliance with National Pollution Discharge Elimination System regulations. Director Torres is married to a fellow chemist and is raising her three children in the community she grew up in. In her first term representing the residents of Division 2, she is excited to work hard towards conservation efforts, maintaining the highest water quality, and ensuring transparency. Her term expires December 2020.

Priya Vedula

Health Policy Analyst

[Loma Linda University Health's Institute for Health Policy and Leadership \(IHPL\)](#)

Pronouns: She, hers



Priya Vedula is a Health Policy Analyst at Loma Linda University Health's Institute for Health Policy and Leadership (IHPL). She collaborates with the team to provide analyses of current state and federal health policies and publish issue briefs on the pressing healthcare matters in San Bernardino County. Priya is also a member of the American Association of University Women and a Committee Member for Assemblywoman Eloise Reyes' Policy47 Program. Her favorite hobby is singing and she has performed the National Anthem for the NBA. Priya completed her undergraduate training in the biological sciences at the University of Michigan and worked as a researcher in the field of microbiology at the University of Minnesota.

She received her Master of Public Health degree from Columbia University.

Los Angeles County, Health Justice Team

Raena Granberry

Maternal & Infant Health Program Manager
[Black Women for Wellness](#)
Pronouns: she, hers



Raena Granberry is a Black Women's Maternal Health advocate. She currently serves as the Maternal and Infant Health Program Manager at Black Women for Wellness. A Spelman alumna raised in Los Angeles by activist parents, she spent most of her early career in grassroots community organizing and politics. She has worked with the California Democratic Party as well as the offices of Former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Services Employees International Union, and the LA Alliance for a New Economy. After subsequent years as a case manager in Child and Family Services, Raena experienced both a stillborn infant loss, and a traumatic preterm delivery at 27 weeks gestation. This ignited her dedication to protecting and supporting pregnant Black women; as a program manager for Great Beginnings for Black Babies, a Group Facilitator and Community Outreach Liaison for the Black Infant Health Program and a consulting partner for Maternal Mental Health Now..

Adjoa Jones

Associate Director, Regional Collaboration – SPA 6
[L.A. County Department of Health Services](#)
Pronouns: she, hers



Adjoa Jones is an Associate Director of Regional Collaboration for Service Planning Area 6 with L.A. County Department of Health Services (DHS). She is a 21-year member/volunteer of Black Women for Wellness (BWW), and has served as Pregnant and Parenting Teen Support Group Coordinator/Moderator, a Shangazi Sisterfriend, and currently now as a Board Champion for the organization. She serves as mentor to numerous youth and young men and women in the community through her work as the former Youth & Young Adult Ministry Director. Adjoa received her BS in Health Science-Health Care Administration from California State University Dominguez Hills, and is currently working on her Master's in Business Administration in Non-Profit Management at American Jewish University.

Diamond Lee, MSW

Association Director, Regional Collaboration – Service Planning Area 8
[Los Angeles County Department of Health Services](#)

Pronouns: she, hers



Diamond Lee, MSW is the Associate Director of Regional Collaboration in Service Planning Area 8 for the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Whole Person Care program. She is a macro social work practitioner with a strong focus on health disparities, race equity, social and justice for issues impacting black people. She has over 10 years of experience working in clinical direct practice, non-profit, and government settings on roles related to individual and community engagement, program development, and program implementation. In her current role as Associate Director of Regional Collaboration she works in collaboration with multiple county departments and the community to improve care coordination and health outcomes on a regional and countywide level. Diamond received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Southern California and her Bachelors of Art degree in English and History from Emory University in Atlanta, GA.

Stella Rae Simon

Analyst

[Coachman Moore & Associates Inc.](#)

Pronouns: she, hers



Stella Rae Simon is an Analyst with Coachman Moore & Associates Inc. (CMA), an organizational development consulting firm with clients in the health and human services, education and non-profit sectors. A former Peace Corps Volunteer in St. Lucia, Stella has expertise in the areas of youth development, sexual and reproductive health and maternal and child health. She is a member of Delta Omega, the national honorary society for graduate studies in public health. Stella holds a Masters of Public Health degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Gillings School of Global Public Health, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.

Monterey County, Economic Justice Team

Sonja Koehler

Senior Manager

[Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative](#)

Pronouns She, hers



Sonja Koehler is Senior Manager of Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative, hosted at First 5 Monterey County, and Principal Consultant at Nekima Strategies. Working in fields as diverse as early childhood and youth development, public housing, and wildfire emergency planning, she brings 20+ years of experience in building collective capacity for change through participatory process design and facilitation, research and data collection and analysis, frameworking and communications. Sonja is first generation American, witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall, was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Benin, co-organized at-the-time the largest anti-Iraq war rally in Chicago, and launched her consulting out of Monterey, California in 2006. Her primary

language is English, her mother tongue is German, at one time could pass as French, and is embarrassed by her Spanish. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and a Master of Public Affairs, both from Indiana University.

Maria Carmen Parra

Community Leader

[Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative](#)

Pronouns: she, hers



Maria Carmen Parra is community leader in the Bright Beginnings Initiative of Monterey County. She is a consultant for the Preschool for All Campaign. Her vision is that every child meet their maximum potential in early childhood education and life. Preschool for all gives to the children the access of education without restrictions to quality. It will support children's academic success and ultimately improve the quality of life for all in Salinas. Maria also has experience in community engagement for the fields of health, safety, housing and education. Maria is a first generation Mexican immigrant and her first language is Spanish. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Collaborative Health and Human Services and Public Policy in California State University Monterey Bay.

Norma Horton Varillas

Early Intervention Specialist

[Young Intervention Inc.](#)

Pronouns: She / Hers



Norma Horton Varillas serves as an Early Intervention Specialist in Young Intervention, Inc. In addition, she brings 10 plus years of experience in the education field where she acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively with young children. Norma's academic background includes an Associates of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education in 2014, Associate of Arts Liberal Arts with a Psychology Emphasis, Culture and Society Emphasis from Hartnell College in 2016, and finally a Bachelor of Science in Child and Adolescent Development from Union Institute and University in 2019. She holds additional certification including Site Supervisor Permit from Commission on Teacher Credentialing in 2018, Be GLAD Second Language Acquisition, Strategies for Literacy ELA/ELD in 2017, Family Educator certified in Positive Discipline in 2018. Norma's first language is Spanish. She has developed a strong sense of devotion as a volunteer in the community. These experiences has given her a vision and deeper appreciation to continue supporting children, families, and community in Monterey County.