

# WILL EMPOWER

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## Executive Cohort Profiles

2019



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY  
*Kalmanovitz Initiative  
for Labor and the Working Poor*

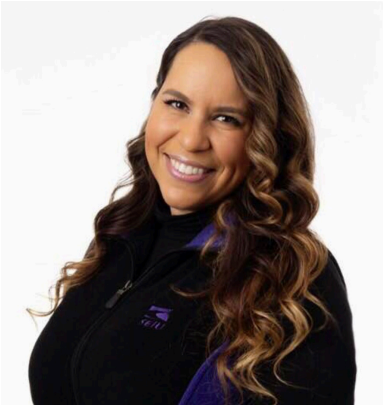
RUTGERS

School of Management  
and Labor Relations

Center for Innovation in Worker  
Organization

WOMEN INNOVATING  
LABOR LEADERSHIP

WILL  
EMPOWER



## Andrea Acevedo.

PRESIDENT

Andrea has just been elected President of SEIU Healthcare in Michigan. Andrea's local holds over 10,000 healthcare workers in hospitals and nursing homes across the state. She is the first woman of color elected into this position and she is ready to lead her local and build a strong membership base. Andrea knows that developing new leaders is the heart and soul of the union and she is ready to keep engaging and empowering members at her local. Andrea has worked in the labor movement for over 13 years from Organizer to Business Representative to elected President. In order to continue developing herself as a leader, Andrea continues to center her own learning and strives to learn something new everyday.



## Angela Lang.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Angela Lang was born and raised in the heart of Milwaukee and has an extensive background in community organizing. In the past, Angela served as both an organizer and State Council Director for the Service Employees International Union, working on the Fight for 15 campaign and others. Before joining BLOC's team as Executive Director, Angela was the Political Director with For Our Future Wisconsin. She is a graduate of Emerge Wisconsin and has had the pleasure of being the featured trainer for Emerge's Diversity Weekend since 2015. Angela is motivated by making substantial and transformative change in her community while developing young, local leaders of color. Her journey in organizing hasn't always been easy, but through it all she has remained a fierce advocate for securing more seats at the table for those who represent the New American Majority.



## Angelina Cruz.

PRESIDENT

Angelina Cruz is the President of Racine Educators United, a public educator union comprised of the Racine Education Association and the Racine Educational Assistants' Association. As the full-time release president of the local, she is charged with representing the best interests of the membership through policies, resolutions, position statements, and action plans of the Representative Assembly. In addition to presiding over all meetings of the Representative Assembly and Executive Board and serving as a non-voting member of all committees, Angelina serves as a representative to the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), the state affiliate Board of Directors. Within this role, Angelina must report presidential activities, fulfill fiduciary responsibilities as defined by the association, and conduct member representation.

In post-Act 10 Wisconsin, all public sector unions must grapple with yearly recertification campaigns and constant membership recruitment. In order to be legally recognized as the local bargaining unit, 51% of all employees – including both members and nonmembers – must vote for the local union to bargain and represent their interests with the employer. Under Angelina's leadership, the local has successfully recertified at over seventy percent of the vote for three consecutive years. The percentage of members has also increased over the past three years. Membership recruitment has been done in conjunction with various organizing campaigns, including the summer organizing program, spring fellows organizing program, and the voucher transparency campaign – in which the local successfully organized to get an insert into property tax bills outlining how much money allotted to go to the public school system is siphoned off for vouchers. The local is also engaged in building an Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS) community coalition to engage in the work of defending and promoting our public schools. Angelina's favorite form of escapism is watching sports, particularly the Milwaukee Brewers and Wisconsin Badgers, and traveling. She lives with her partner Nick and her two cats, Chewie and Daniel Tiger. As an avid Star Wars fan and a union leader, she fancies herself a member of the Rebel Alliance. She is the aunt of four nephews and one niece who are old enough to be embarrassed by her love of Harry Potter, but impressed by her extensive record collection.



## Anna Harvey.

COORDINATOR

Born in Guyana, South America, Anna has lived in several places including the UK, Italy, Belgium, and now Switzerland. Since 2016, Anna has been based in Nyon, Switzerland as a staff member of UNI Global Union, the global private sector union which represents more than 20 million workers from over 150 different countries in the fastest growing sectors in the world – skills and services. Anna is the Coordinator for UNI Finance, UNI's sector union which represents 3 million finance and insurance workers worldwide. Anna's role is to build bargaining power for finance workers in the MENA, Europe, Americas, Africa and Asia regions, negotiating Global framework agreements (GFAs) with multinational companies and ensuring implementation of such GFAs through the effective use of trade union alliances and European works councils. Anna is working to increase UNI Finance's political influence

through shaping regulation and influencing regional and global decision-making bodies and encouraging more affiliate engagement in terms of the changing nature of the labour market, and the participation of youth and women.

Anna went to UNI Global Union in 2013 with a strong background of activism and strategic policymaking, having worked with a range of stakeholders including trade unions and NGOs to campaign for labour and human rights in general. Anna has worked with international member-led workers' rights organizations, the European Union, and Reproductive Health Supplies coalitions which allowed her to develop strong diplomacy, advocacy, policy, communications, and lobbying skills. Anna also held leadership roles in WYSE, Amnesty International, and the U.N in Italy.



## April Sims.

SECRETARY TREASURER

April Sims was elected Secretary Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO by its affiliated unions in December 2018 and she began her four-year term on Jan. 5, 2019. She is the first woman of color to be elected as a WSLC executive officer. April has been working with the WSLC since 2015, assuming the role of Political and Strategic Campaign Director and Field Mobilization Director. April has also served AFSCME Council 28 (WFSE) as a member, shop steward, elected union officer, and union staffer from 2002-15. April has extensive experience in member education, communication, community partnerships, and mobilization around legislative issues and political campaigns. A native of gritty Tacoma, April lives with her husband, two daughters, and 100-pound chocolate lab. When she's not thinking about politics or advocating for workers, families, and communities, she's defending her title as the family Scrabble champ.



## Darlene Lombos.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Darlene Lombos is the Executive Director of Community Labor United (CLU), a long-term partnership between some of the strongest base building community organizations and unions in Greater Boston. Since 2005, CLU has successfully moved strategic campaigns that protect and promote the interests of working-class families and communities of color in Greater Boston and throughout the Commonwealth. Through a program of coalition building, research and policy development, public education and grassroots mobilization, CLU advances policies that promote quality jobs, affordable housing and sustainable local economies. CLU also convenes the Green Justice Coalition (GJC), a group of frontline climate justice organizations positioned to influence decisions on energy policies through state and municipal interventions that draw on the strengths of grassroots organizing,

civic engagement and communications strategies. Darlene has been organizing around various community issues since 1996, including police accountability and home daycare justice at Direct Action for Rights and Equality in Providence, RI as well as transportation equity, gentrification and displacement, and education reform at Sisters in Action for Power in Portland, OR. She brings nearly twenty years' experience in community and youth organizing, leadership development and coalition-building to this work. A few years ago, she was elected as the first woman of color Vice President of the Greater Boston Labor Council.





## Flor Rodriguez.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Flor Rodriguez is originally from Durango, Mexico, and has lived in Los Angeles since 1992. Flor joined the CLEAN Carwash Campaign as a Community Organizer in 2012 and rapidly transitioned to lead the Campaign's efforts to institute the new Carwash Worker Center in 2013. Flor is currently leading CLEAN as the Executive Director since 2016. Before CLEAN, Flor started her career working at IDEPSCA in 2006 in the Day Laborer Program, performing community outreach to businesses within the day laborer movement. She rose rapidly through the ranks and eventually became the overall coordinator for IDEPSCA's six day laborer centers.



## Hilary Glasglow.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hilary Glasglow was lucky to grow up in a small town in Southern Colorado where union was the way of life. Even as Colorado and its' politics have evolved, Pueblo has remained a rustbelt stronghold for the labor movement. Pueblo was founded through the establishment of a steel mill owned by the Rockefellers, and was the main industry in Pueblo for several decades. Pueblo's history spans from the 1914 Ludlow Massacre where the National Guard slaughtered union miners during a labor dispute in 1914, to organized steelworkers who after 60 years still remembered the power of the strike and stayed on the picket line for seven long years in the 1990s. Hilary remembers those years and the impact it had on her community. All of Pueblo's core industries are organized—the grocery stores, the teachers, firefighters,

cops, city workers, county workers—everyone is in a union. It wasn't until Hilary joined the labor movement that she reflected on the rich and turbulent history of her town and how much it impacted the skin she was in.

In 2006, Hilary was hired at Colorado WINS. She didn't know what an "organizer" was, but uniting people in the struggle came naturally to her. Within 6 months, Hilary was promoted to Lead, then Coordinator, to Southern Colorado Political Director, to Organizing Director, until she was finally the Executive Director. Hilary took the Executive Director role in 2016 at a difficult time - 60% of staff was laid off and the local was crumbling. With four staff and a dedicated executive board of true unionists, Colorado WINS won a Democratic trifecta in 2018 and passed a full-scale collective bargaining bill the following year after half a year of canvassing and building political power alongside of labor and progressive partners.



## Janel Bailey.

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Janel Bailey is an experienced campaigner who's devoted her career to organizing to improve the lives of working people, especially queer and Black workers. Born and raised in Chicago, Janel got started as an activist as a part of a queer youth organizing campaign to spread HIV prevention resources more equitably across the city. Janel is currently serving the Los Angeles Black Worker Center as the Co-Executive Director of Organizing and Programs. Janel has worked with unions and worker organizations around the country since 2010, including: the Service Employees International Union, the Chicago Worker Center for Racial Justice, Interfaith Worker Justice, and the National Jobs With Justice network. It remains a key value to Janel to continue the traditions of direct action organizing to get her people paid and to expand the often conservative confines of traditional labor

organizing to better the lives of queer and trans Black and Brown people. Recent victories include organizing alongside security officers in Milwaukee to win the first industry-wide union, as well as supporting security officers in Chicago to recover more than \$100,000 in stolen wages. When Janel is not explicitly resisting various forms of oppression, she's most likely hopped up on coffee, wiping out at a roller rink, or looking for a deal on an international flight. She tends to have shockingly good luck at calling radio stations and winning bingo games. Janel is honored to serve and organize alongside her working class siblings in any fight that is just and preserves their dignity.



## Maritza Silva-Farrell.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Prior to becoming Executive Director in November 2016, Maritza was ALIGN's Deputy Director and Campaign Director. Maritza has led or played a critical role in coalitions such as Real Affordability for All, Caring Across Generations – which secured \$1.2 million in funding for undocumented and low-income seniors to access home care – the Universal Pre-K campaign and the campaign that successfully halted Walmart's plans to develop in East New York. Previously, Maritza has worked with the Long Island Progressive Coalition, the New York Public Interest Research Group, and United Students Against Sweatshops. A native of Ecuador, Maritza earned her BA in journalism from the Central University of Ecuador. She later completed a BA degree in Communications from SUNY Old Westbury. Maritza's vision is of a just and sustainable New York City, achieved by workers and community coming together to tackle inequality and climate change.



## Merrie Najimy.

PRESIDENT

Merrie Najimy is the President of the 110,000-member Massachusetts Teachers Association and is an ardent advocate for public education. Najimy has served as an elementary school teacher at Concord Public Schools for 23 years, has been President of the Concord teachers Association for 11 years, and has been a member of the MTA Board of Directors for 6 years. As CTA president, Najimy has brought open bargaining – a transparent approach to winning contract campaigns that is based on a broad vision for education and encourages member participation at every step – to her local. She then introduced other locals to the concept through meetings involving members from throughout the state.

Najimy grew up in Pittsfield, MA and is a Graduate of Berkshire Community College and Framingham State University. Growing up as an Arab-American student in

Pittsfield, she felt alienated by the Dick and Jane Reader. "I did not see my family and my culture represented," she says. "I became a teacher to bring a wider world view to all students." Najimy says that she will lead the resistance against austerity budgets, an agenda driven by standardized tests, and a prescriptive curriculum that robs students of meaningful learning. She will fight for fully funded public schools and public higher education, autonomy and respect for educators, and will build even stronger unions in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision against working people in the Janus v. AFSCME case. Working in coalition with others will help build union power, Najimy believes. "When we join with our natural allies – labor, parents, students and progressive social justice organizations – we will advance all of our struggles," she says.



## Natasha Pickens.

PRESIDENT

Natasha Pickens was elected President of Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 6355, Missouri State Workers Union (MSWU) in 2017. CWA Local 6355/ MSWU represents public sector workers in the Missouri Department of Social Services, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Parkway School District Custodial and Warehouse staff and Missouri Foster Parents. Natasha began her career with the Missouri Department of Social Services in the Family Support Division as a caseworker in 2005, she joined CWA Local 6355 in 2010, and became a steward in 2011. Natasha worked with another activist in her office and together with their union leaders supporting them, they were able to get their office 80% organized. Natasha served on the bargaining committee, was the women's committee chair, and worked as the elections coordinator for her local before she was elected Vice President in 2014. Natasha is also the public sector's representative on the women's committee for her international union.





## **Reyna Lopez.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reyna is a leader and proud daughter of immigrants from Mexico, who came to Oregon in the late 80's following the migration of farm work in the Marion County area. Reyna grew up in Salem, Oregon and graduated from Willamette University with her BA in Political Science and Sociology. For over 12 years, Reyna has been a fierce leader and advocate for the Latinx community in Oregon. Reyna's tireless work has led to tuition equality for Oregon's Dreamer population, the first bilingual-bicultural ballot-measure campaign in Oregon, gender justice at Our Oregon and campaigns fighting for paid family leave. Reyna is also the recipient of the Immigrant Award from the American Association of Immigration Lawyers of Oregon, Willamette University's Young Alumni of the Year Award, and the Young Visionary of the Year Award in 2019 from Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon for her work in social justice causes, campaigns, movement and coalition building.



## **Rhonda Rogers.**

DIRECTOR

Rhonda began her union career in 1997 as an active member of IUS-CWA local 801 in Dayton, Ohio working at an auto parts assembly plant. When the Company downsized, Rhonda was hired at AK Steel in her hometown of Middletown, Ohio where she became a member of the Armco Employees Independent Federation (AEIF), an independent union that merged with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Union in 2006 during a 13 month lockout. Rhonda was a union steward and a member of the Community Services Committee. In 2007, Rhonda was the first woman elected at her local lodge to the position of Committeeman, a full-time union position. From there, Rhonda chaired the Human Rights and Community Service Committees and eventually moved to Hollywood, Maryland where she worked at the IAM's William W. Winpisinger Education &

Technology Center as an Education Representative. Rhonda was promoted to the position of Director of the Women's, Human Rights, Young Workers, and Community Services Departments in August 2017. Rhonda earned an Associates Degree in Management at Miami University, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Labor Studies at The National Labor College in Silver Spring, Maryland, and a Master's Degree in Work & Labor Policy with an Advanced Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies at SUNY Empire State College, in Saratoga Springs, New York. Rhonda is also a proud member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), the A Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), Pride at Work (P@W), Council FIRE (First Inhabitants Rights & Equality), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Organization of Women (NOW), the United Democratic Women of Maryland (UDWM), and the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW). She has two daughters, one son, and three granddaughters.



## **Stacy Davis Gates.**

VICE PRESIDENT

Stacy Davis Gates has served as the Political and Legislative Director for the Chicago Teachers Union for the past six years, has been a high school teacher for over a decade, and lives on the south side of Chicago with her husband and three children. While at the CTU, Stacy has been the architect of bold political and legislative campaigns for the schools and city that all Chicagoans deserve. Stacy has successfully raised millions of dollars to elect classroom teachers to all levels of local government and to challenge school privatizers and union-busters. She has also spearheaded successful statewide legislative campaigns to pass the strongest charter school accountability measures in the country, to restore the bargaining rights of Chicago Public Schools employees, and to fully fund public education by ending tax loopholes for the 1%. Stacy was elected Chair of United Working Families and serves as a board member for The Action Center on Race & the Economy. Stacy is a proud graduate of Saint Mary's College, the University of Notre Dame, and Concordia University.



## Ursula Price.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ursula Price is the Executive Director of the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice, an organization committed to racial, gender, and immigrant justice; and dedicated to building power at the intersection of race and the economy. Ursula is an accomplished criminal justice reform champion with deep roots in community organizing. Born and raised in rural Mississippi, Ursula has been organizing for criminal justice reform in New Orleans since 2001. She joined Safe Streets/Strong Communities as a community organizer in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and helped drive a historic campaign for police accountability. This led to the creation of the Independent Police Monitor, which Ursula joined in 2010 and has helped lead for the last eight years.

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