



## Workforce Systems Leadership Program

# MEET THE 2022-23 COHORT

We are excited to introduce the 2022 Workforce Systems Leadership Program (WSLP) cohort! WSLP has brought together a group of 21 senior leaders to help them meet the challenges in the workforce development field while fostering the kind of cross-sector collaboration that will be even more critical to New York City in the months and years to come.



### **Abby Hamilton**

**DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE DOE FUND**

Abby Hamilton is the Director of Internal Training and Professional Development at The Doe Fund. She has worked with vulnerable populations for 8 years, working mainly with those who are experiencing or have been touched by the criminal justice system. Her scope of work has been focused on the areas of adult education and workforce readiness. She attended Bowling Green State University in Northwest Ohio where she majored in Psychology and Spanish and found a passion for helping others and improving her community.



### **Alexander Afranie-Sakyi**

**SENIOR POLICY ASSOCIATE, CORPORATION FOR A SKILLED WORKFORCE**

Alexander currently serves as a Senior Policy Associate with Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW), where he supports the Federal, State, and Local Systems Change Team. He works to activate change and transformation within multiple levels of the workforce development sector. In his current role, he also assists the evaluation of multiple, ongoing workforce development systems in California, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Before coming to CSW, Alexander was a Policy Manager for Jobs for the Future (JFF) on their Federal Policy Team and served in Senator Tim Kaine's (D-VA) office. He received his Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh.



## Allyson Bay [in](#)

### MANAGER OF EVALUATION AND LEARNING, JOBSFIRSTNYC

Allyson Bay is the Manager of Evaluation and Learning at JobsFirstNYC, providing leadership on learning and evaluation, advancing the alignment of organizational goals and impact across all of JobsFirstNYC's solutions. Previously, Allyson served in various capacities at Buckner Children and Family Services, an international child welfare and family strengthening agency, providing strategic support and leadership for domestic and international permanency and community-based programs. Allyson has consulted for a number of nonprofits and agency leaders on program implementation and monitoring best practices. Allyson has a BA in Sociology and an MBA with a concentration in Entrepreneurship from Dallas Baptist University.



## Claire Linnemeier [in](#)

### ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, BROOKLYN NAVY YARD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Claire Linnemeier is the Assistant Vice President for Workforce Development at the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (BNYDC). She is from Indiana, where she started her career in economic and workforce development consulting at various private and public agencies. Currently, much of her work focuses on supporting and growing the Brooklyn STEAM Center. The Brooklyn STEAM Center is a career and technical training school, immersed within a work environment that supports a diverse student body from multiple high schools representing a range of socio economic backgrounds and academic abilities. Claire also helps develop the BNYDC Internship program, which matches and places Brooklyn-area college students in internships with tenants on the Yard. She has a Master's of Public Administration from the School of Public & Environmental Affairs at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis.



## Denia Tavarez [in](#)

### SENIOR DIRECTOR, COMMON POINT QUEENS

Denia Tavarez is Senior Director of the Adult Workforce Programs at Common Point Queens. She has 12 years of professional experience in workforce services and community development managing a growing portfolio of career pathways programs, educational programs and direct job placement assistance. Her experience includes managing public and private contracts and grants, submitting for RFPs, and working with community leaders to discuss new ventures and strategize for community sustainability and economic growth. Denia obtained her Bachelor's degree and Human Resources Certification from Pace University's Lubin School of Business. She is fluent in English and Spanish and recently completed the Workforce Academy for Policy and Advocacy at the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals.



## Destiny Colon [in](#)

### PROGRAM DIRECTOR, PATH FORWARD

Destiny Colon is the Program Director for Path Forward, which provides workforce development services to caregivers with a gap in their careers. She is a professional change-maker and barrier remover with more than 13 years experience in project management in the non-profit sector. At Path Forward Destiny leads the program team in strategic planning, curriculum design, and relationship management. Prior to Path Forward, Destiny worked with The Doe Fund, Back on My Feet and the National US-Arab Chamber of Commerce. In addition to providing guidance and leadership at Path Forward, she also serves as a Career Coach for Outco Inc.



## Devin Corrigan [in](#)

### US GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS LEAD, MULTIVERSE

Devin Corrigan serves as the US Government Relations Lead at Multiverse, a national apprenticeship training provider. She started as the third US employee and scaled the company's operational and governmental functions to support hundreds of tech apprentices. Prior to Multiverse, Devin spent four years at the New York City's Mayor's Office working across systems to improve the career readiness of one million young New Yorkers. Devin is a proud Queens native and CUNY graduate. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and the best dog in the world.



## Eno Awotoye [in](#)

### PROGRAM SPECIALIST, RETAIL ACTION PROJECT

Eno is an adept retail specialist and instructor, motivating and inspiring retail workers as they build power to improve standards and advance their careers. In her current role, she identifies, creates, and runs programs to fill industry skills and career growth needs. An accomplished community leader and organizer, Eno serves in a variety of leadership positions in organizations to build and support humanitarian and educational programs - regional and International. Eno is an artist, labor rights instructor, worker advocate and activist. Asked why, she states - "Service to life is my gratitude ..."



## Esmeralda Herrera [in](#)

### DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, COMMUNITAS AMERICA

Esmeralda Herrera is an ecosystem builder who works at the intersection of business and social impact to support local entrepreneurs. In her current role, Esmeralda spearheads a state-certified accelerator in the Bronx and Harlem that works directly with founders – primarily women and entrepreneurs of color – to help build, launch, and expand social ventures that reach vulnerable communities. Innovative approaches drive Esmeralda to create impact. Previously she worked with international organizations in India and China to empower local change makers to revitalize their local economy.



## Je'Nean Jones-Seo [in](#)

**ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, NYC DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES**

Je'Nean Jones-Seo currently serves as the Assistant Commissioner for Workforce1 at the New York City Department of Small Business Services. In this role, Je'Nean is responsible for leading the overall strategy, design and operations of the network of Workforce1 Career Centers across New York City with a goal of connecting New Yorkers to quality employment. In her previous role as Executive Director of Center Based Programs, Je'Nean was responsible for creating customized workforce development programs targeting Veterans, justice involved individuals, out of work and out of school youth, foreign-born New Yorkers and the general population. Her dedication and passion to the work played an instrumental role in connecting 20,000+ New York jobseekers to opportunities across the 5 boroughs every year. She is a graduate of Indiana University, with a Bachelors of Science in Biology and a Bachelors of Arts in Psychology.



## Joshua Thomas-Serrano [in](#)

**SENIOR ADVISOR, MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

A deep believer in the power of progressive, evidence-based policy solutions to address inequity and systemic bias, Joshua sought to work in local government, putting some of those policy and programmatic approaches into action. This belief brought him to the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, first as a Graduate Fellow and currently as a Senior Advisor. Prior to joining NYC Opportunity, Josh spent five years in development and marketing at Teens for Food Justice, a nonprofit working to end food insecurity through building indoor hydroponic farms, capable of growing over 10,000 pounds of food per year, in NYC middle and high schools. Josh earned his bachelor's degree from Hobart and William Smith Colleges and his Master's in Public Administration from Baruch College. Outside of work, he enjoys long bike rides throughout the boroughs, when the weather permits.



## Kaveh Sarfehjooy [in](#)

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & PARTNERSHIPS, GOODWILL INDUSTRIES NYNJ**

Kaveh Sarfehjooy is the Director of Education & Partnerships at Goodwill NYNJ. He received a Master's in Teaching Of English To Speakers Of Other Languages from The New School in 2012. Before changing careers, Kaveh worked in marketing at a record label. His ESL career began at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. Starting as a literacy instructor at Goodwill, Kaveh grew into the role of Director of Literacy Services, and now oversees the strategic planning and curricula design for multiple education and training programs across all workforce related contracts serving over 2,000 adults per year on public assistance in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx.



## Laura Bucko [in](#)

### INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Laura is an Industry Engagement Manager at the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department at the New York City Department of Education. She oversees Industry Commissions for Business & Finance, IT and Healthcare in order to inform schools with CTE programs on labor market and industry trends. Laura has overseen several special projects including the development of a new Healthcare Core Curriculum. Her team will be supporting the launch of the FutureReadyNYC and Modern Youth Apprentice programs, expanding career connected learning opportunities for NYCDOE students. Laura was previously the Vice President/Director of Communications at the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. Laura holds a Bachelor's in English Literature from Smith College and a Master's in Fine Arts in Writing from Sarah Lawrence College.



## Leila Barconey [in](#)

### DEPUTY CHIEF OF SERVICES, NYC PARKS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Leila currently serves as the Deputy Chief of Services for Workforce Development, where she leads the Coaching and Continuing Education units. She provides Career Coaches, Instructors, Coordinators, Trainers, and staff with the direction, feedback, encouragement, and tools they need. Focusing primarily on POP workers, Leila manages many of the POP's skill- and resource-building programs and initiatives to ensure the division meets or exceeds its objectives. In addition, she played a pivotal role in developing POP through the inclusion of programming and partnerships targeting specific career sectors and discrete populations within POP. Leila holds a Bachelor's in English from Georgetown University and has completed graduate courses at Columbia University and CUNY Hunter College. She lives in the beautiful borough of the Bronx with her family and likes to spend her free time traveling or at home with a good book.



## Michael Manipakone [in](#)

### DIRECTOR, QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Michael is an innovative workforce development and experiential learning professional who has over nine years of experience in project and program management. He has worked both in for-profit and non-profit institutions in areas such as employer engagement, work-based learning, curriculum development, career pathways, and fiscal to deliver high quality outcomes for employers and job seekers. He prides himself in his intellectual curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills that he enthusiastically brings to all projects. He is a first-generation Laotian American. He received his Master's from Stony Brook University, his Bachelor's from Columbia University and Associate's from CUNY Kingsborough Community College. Currently, he serves as the Director of the Strengthening Community College Grant, a five million dollar grant awarded by the Department of Labor to address systemic issues in workforce education and development in New York.



## Michelle S. Ng [in](#)

**MARKET ACTIVATIONS OPERATIONS LEADER, ERNST & YOUNG LLP**

Michelle has extensive experience working with government agencies, philanthropic foundations and community-based organizations to create societal impact. She has garnered recognition for her leadership in corporate responsibility and community engagement. She was selected to join the Sterling Network Fellowship, Chief Network, NationSwell Council, Advisory Board of Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation and Community Involvement Roundtable at the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship. Michelle previously completed the Asian American Executive Program at Stanford Graduate School of Business, Presidio Institute Fellows program, Coro Leadership New York program, Leadership Academy program at the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship and the Great Leaders Program at the Austin W. Marxe School of Public and International Affairs at Baruch College.



## Nadine Sylvester [in](#)

**SITE DIRECTOR, YEAR UP**

Nadine has been in the non-profit sector for over 15 years serving youth. In her current role, she has helped close the “opportunity divide” through training and connecting talented and motivated young adults to companies in need of entry-level talent. Additionally, Nadine is the Executive Director of a non-profit, Rohan Levy Foundation, which was founded in honor of her son killed by gun violence in Brooklyn. The Rohan Levy Foundation provides college scholarships and leadership development for youth in Brooklyn, New York. Nadine earned her Master’s in Social Work from Fordham University and her Bachelor’s from New York University. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated – Brooklyn Alumnae Chapter, where she serves as the chair of the Social Action Committee. Her guiding principle is Shirley Chisolm’s adage, “Service is the rent you pay for room on this earth.”



## Serrina Goodman [in](#)

**SENIOR DIRECTOR, OPPORTUNITIES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW**

Serrina began her career as a Pre-med student and quickly discovered that healthcare was a great entry point but not a career match. With resume in hand, Serrina was hired as a Receptionist at Irene Cohen’s Employment Agency on Fifth Avenue. There she discovered the need for viable employment opportunities in underserved communities. Serrina created and launched a 100% Virtual Training & Employment Bootcamp for young adults as a deterrent to Gun Violence. She has received awards from The Advocacy Academy, various City Council Citations, certificates of completion for the NYATEP-Advocacy Program and a Certificate in Social Impact and Management. She is the Chair of OBT’s DEI & B Committee and The NYC Youth Leadership Council.



## Shakira Hart [in](#)

**CREW SUPERVISOR, THE HOPE PROGRAM**

Shakira Intervine trains and employs low income community members to create and maintain green infrastructure. She is a cross functional leader looking to grow within the Workforce Development Sector. With years as an Employment Specialist and now Supervisor of Intervine, she is working herself backwards into the desired position of Director of Workforce Program. The grounds perspective and experience front facing clients; motivating and supporting throughout job search until employment was gained compared to the current where she fosters, encourages and facilitates the essential skills necessary for job search. Each role has required a collaborative work ethic, data driven decisions and a goal oriented approach. Shakira also has a passion for quality assurance and control.



## Shuk Cheng [in](#)

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR, EDUCATION AND CAREER SERVICES DIVISION, CHINESE-AMERICAN PLANNING COUNCIL**

Shuk King Cheng, Deputy Director of CPC's Education and Career Services (ECS) Division, is an energetic and passionate youth educator. She oversees several DYCD funded afterschool initiatives that bridges the educational gap and income inequity in NYC. Her amazing team of committed youth and workforce developers also provide a College Access and Resource Program, Project Gateway, to first generation college applicants and their families. As a firm believer in providing computer and financial literacy to all students, Shuk empowers and challenges her team to also be strong advocates for new immigrants and marginalized communities. Shuk graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology with B.S. in Economics. In late 2016, she made a career change to Education after 6 years of tenure in global tax. She is certified in teaching English as a second language to adults and speaks three Chinese dialects (Fujianese, Mandarin, and Cantonese). Lastly, she is excited to be accepted to the WSLP!



## Susannah Abbate [in](#)

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT, SNUG HARBOR CULTURAL CENTER & BOTANICAL GARDEN**

Susannah joined Snug Harbor in 2010 as a part-time educator and now supervises visitor services, school and adult education, volunteer engagement, and workforce development. She also oversees Horticulture at Snug Harbor's 83-acre campus and the Snug Harbor Heritage Farm. Under her leadership, the number of people served through Snug Harbor Education programs has more than quadrupled. Abbate is a leader of education initiatives across Staten Island, co-chairing the Schools Workgroup of the Staten Island Child Wellness Initiative and serving on the Equity Alliance of Staten Island. Abbate also oversees the implementation of Snug Harbor's DEI & Access Plan, serves on the Anti-Racist Workgroup of Culture, and on the Staten Island Hunger Task Force. Her primary language is English, but she stumbles along very slowly in Spanish.