



9th Annual New Mexico KIDS COUNT Conference

A Just, Equitable & Sustainable Future for New Mexico Families: Centering Children & Women of Color in Recovery

October 21, 2021

Presenter Biographies

Key Speakers

Welcome & Event Overview



James Jimenez • Executive Director, NM Voices for Children

James Jimenez joined NM Voices in 2013 as the Director of Research and Policy, becoming Executive Director in 2016. He also serves as an adjunct professor at the University of New Mexico's School of Public Administration. In both positions he draws from his considerable experience in using the budget as a strategic tool while working in state and city government. James served as the Chief of Staff under Governor Bill Richardson from 2006 to 2008, and as Cabinet Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration from 2003 to 2006. He was also City Manager for the city of Rio Rancho and serves on the boards of directors for several nonprofit organizations.

Opening Remarks



Michelle Lujan Grisham • Governor, State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham is the thirty-second governor of New Mexico and the first Democratic Latina to be elected governor in U.S. history. As governor, she has implemented a series of evidence-based policies aimed at transforming New Mexico's public education system, expanding the state's economy to include more high-quality employment opportunities, and preserving New Mexico's air, land and water. She has launched the most progressive legislative agenda in state history, notably a historic investment in public education and a landmark transition to clean energy, as well as securing breakthroughs in public health, economic development, women's and minority rights, and more. She has led one of the nation's most aggressive and effective state efforts against COVID-19, with New Mexico taking science-backed steps to protect workers, families, and health care resources and leading the nation in its vaccination drive. She was a longtime state Cabinet Secretary at both the New Mexico Department of Aging and Long-term Services and Department of Health. She was elected to the U.S. Congress in 2011, serving three terms in Washington on behalf of New Mexico's 1st Congressional District. She was born in Los Alamos and graduated from St. Michael's High School in Santa Fe before earning undergraduate and law degrees from the University of New Mexico.



Key Speakers



What America Needs for Transformation

Taifa Smith Butler • *President, Demos*

Taifa Smith Butler is the President of Demos, a think tank working to fight systemic racism through research, advocacy, multi-platform communications, legal expertise and deep partnerships with grassroots organizations across the country. Taifa became president in July of 2021 after serving on the Board of Trustees for four years. She joined Demos after nearly a decade at the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, where she served as president and CEO from 2015 to 2021. Prior to joining the GBPI team, she was the policy and communications director for the Georgia Family Connection Partnership, where she monitored public policy's impact on children, families, and communities. She is an alumna of Mount Holyoke College and holds a Master's in Public Management and Policy from the Heinz School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University.



Seizing the Moment for Kids & Families

Amber Wallin • *Deputy Director, NM Voices for Children*

As deputy director, Amber Wallin oversees NM Voices' research and policy work with an emphasis on education, tax and budget, hunger, and economic policies. She joined NM Voices in 2012 as a Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Fellow, after which she was a Research and Policy Analyst and later KIDS COUNT Director. Amber has worked in the public sector at the municipal, state, and federal levels, working in the government department at New Mexico State University and the budget department at the city of Las Cruces. She received her MPA from NMSU. Born and raised in New Mexico, Amber lives in Albuquerque with her husband and two young children.



Announcement & Introduction to Panel

Ken Martinez • *Chair, Board of Directors, NM Voices for Children*

Ken Martinez is a retired child and family psychologist. He has been on the faculty in the Department of Psychiatry at the UNM Health Sciences Center since 1978. He was Children's Behavioral Director for the state from 1997 to 2005, and chair of the Children, Youth and Families Division of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors. Ken served on the Rosalynn Carter Mental Health Symposium Planning Committee. He retired from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in 2017 after having served as the lead disparities reduction resource with AIR's National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention. Ken is the author of numerous articles and book chapters as well as being a local and national presenter.

Community Panel: Panelists



Suha Amer • *Co-Founder, United Voices for Refugee Rights*

Suha Amer was born in Iraq, but war and religious persecution forced her to move with her three children to Albuquerque in 2008 as a refugee. Suha began working with the Refugee Well-being Project (RWP) in 2009 as an interpreter. Her role expanded to include research aspects and currently she leads Youth Initiatives. She is a co-founder of United Voices for Refugee Rights (UNVR), a nonprofit organization that is now the home of the RWP and other projects to support newcomers in New Mexico. Suha received an M.A. in Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies from UNM in 2013 and was a co-director and teacher at Congregation B'nai Israel preschool for four years. Suha also worked as an Arabic interpreter/translator with APS helping many refugee families and their children bridge cultural and language gaps. Her passion for working with children and their families led to a new effort through UNVR to build a child care center at the Albuquerque Islamic Center for Arab-speaking families.



Naja Druva • *Child and Family Therapist, Black Health New Mexico*

Naja Druva is a licensed therapist who has spent her career working with New Mexico children and their families. Her specialty is addressing childhood trauma within family systems. Naja's training includes Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), and Trauma Resource Management (TRM). After the events of May 2020 Naja felt moved to participate in the current civil rights movement by focusing her experience and training on addressing the trauma inflicted on families of color by inequitable, unjust, and violent systems within our society. By applying a trauma-informed lens to her work, Naja hopes to educate those working within systems about how to care for themselves and others while making positive change in society at large.



Jaime Gloshey • *(Navajo/White Mountain Apache/Kiowa) Co-Director, Native Women Lead*

Jaime, a certified coach focusing on leadership and healing for Indigenous women, co-leads key efforts in access to capital, fund design, partnership, advancement, and policy advocacy while leading program design, international development, and data/evaluation oversight for Native Women Lead. She co-leads design and implementation of NWL's Matriarch Funds. Jamie also works in partnership with Roanhorse Consulting LLC to co-design and develop initiatives on economic inclusion and ecosystem building. She serves on UpTogether's Board of Directors, Closing the Women's Wealth Gap working research group, is a SHEEO Activator, and an Advisor for Angels of Impact. In addition, Jaime is co-building a community of practice focused on international Indigenous impact metrics with Raven Indigenous Capital, Canada's Indigenous Innovation Initiative, and Australia's National Centre of Indigenous Excellence. In the fall of 2021, Jaime will participate in the NM Women of Color Leadership Initiative. She holds a BA in Native American Studies and Political Science and MPA in Public Management from UNM.

Community Panel: Panelists



Lori Martinez • *Executive Director, Ngage New Mexico*

Lori Martinez joined the Ngage New Mexico team in March 2017, initially as the Assistant Director, then becoming the Executive Director in November 2017. Before coming to Ngage she worked at NMSU for 9 years overseeing the Social Work Services program and Aggie Cupboard food pantry under Counseling and Campus Health. She previously worked in Early Intervention providing Family Therapy and Social Work services. Having worked for years in Doña Ana County providing direct services, Lori became familiar with many of the challenges the county faces. She has experience working in early childhood, with individuals with developmental disabilities, in suicide prevention and intervention, mental health counseling, case management, program development, hunger/food insecurity, and inpatient psychiatric services. Lori received her master's and bachelor's degrees in Social Work from NMSU. She serves as an Assistant Professor and Certified Field Instructor for the NMSU School of Social Work.



Marian J. Méndez-Cera • *Workers' Justice Lead Organizer & Policy Coordinator, EL CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos*

Marian Méndez-Cera has lived in the U.S. since late 2005. Originally from Guadalajara, Jalisco, México, she moved to the U.S. when she was 11 years old. She graduated from UNM and received a double major in Psychology and Philosophy with a concentration in Pre-law. Her interest in social justice began in 2011. Initially, she became active with EL CENTRO because they provided her with information and opportunities that allowed Marian to further her education. Now, she says organizing is a “part of my life, part of who I am, part of my family.” Marian has demonstrated her deep passion for social justice and equity through her dedication in various campaigns and community-led projects. She continues to promote human rights as EL CENTRO's Workers' Justice Lead Organizer and Policy Coordinator

Community Panel: Moderator



Charlotte Little • *Vice Chair, Board of Directors, NM Voices for Children*

Charlotte Little, from the Pueblos of San Felipe and Taos, is president and CEO of Little Strategies, an Albuquerque-based consulting firm. Her professional background includes service as: tribal administrator; human resources director; lobbyist with the Setter Group; and an ambulatory health care facility administrator overseeing health clinics in Albuquerque and six New Mexico tribal communities. She is a member of the San Felipe Pueblo Health Board, which promotes, develops, and improves the delivery of health care services to the citizens of the Pueblo. Charlotte has served as director and president of the Board of Directors of Emerge New Mexico, an organization dedicated to identifying, training, and encouraging women to run for and win public office. She earned her BA from UNM.