

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Shriver Center's Racial Justice Institute Announces 42 New Fellows in 2019**

*Groundbreaking Program has trained 200+ advocates from across the country on racial equity in anti-poverty advocacy*

CHICAGO—The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law today announced 42 Fellows who have been selected to take part in its 2019 Racial Justice Institute (RJI), a leadership program that equips and coordinates anti-poverty advocates to address the role that racism plays in causing and perpetuating poverty. This year's cohort of advocates come from organizations advancing justice in 10 states and the District of Columbia, and notably includes new representation from the south with Fellows from Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia.

“As the federal government continues to dismantle critical civil rights protections for people of color, it is more urgent than ever that advocates for economic justice across the country ground their work in an understanding and pursuit of racial justice,” said Kimberly Merchant, Director of the Racial Justice Institute and Network. “We are thrilled that this year's Fellows not only hail from various regions across the country but are also racially diverse, providing enrichment to our program as advocates work together to drive equitable change for people living in poverty.”

The 2019 cohort includes public interest lawyers, legal aid attorneys, community advocates, community organizers, public defenders, and paralegals. The Fellows' advocacy covers issues such as criminal justice reform, consumer protection, and immigrants' rights, among others. Under the intensive six-month RJI program which begins in June, the Fellows will be exposed to a core set of racial equity concepts which they can apply to projects they are carrying out with and on behalf of various communities.

“This year's Fellows are working with communities facing many systemic challenges, including children in the immigration system, Native Americans affected by predatory payday lending practices, restoration of voting rights for justice-involved individuals, and health access for low-income seniors of color,” said Janerick Holmes, newly named Associate Director of the Racial Justice Institute and Network. “As RJI participants, they will learn tools and concepts they can use to mitigate the impact structural racism has on the communities they serve.”

Entering its sixth year, the Shriver Center's Racial Justice Institute has cultivated more than 200 advocates, representing nearly 80 organizations in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Following this year's training, RJI will have helped shape more than 240 advocates representing 90 organizations in 31 states. Fellows emerge from the program ready to help shape policies that support a more racially just society and continue to work in concert as part of the RJI alumni network.

The full list of the 2019 Fellows can be found below.

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The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law provides national leadership in advancing laws and policies that secure justice to improve the lives and opportunities of people living in poverty. We specialize in practical solutions. We advocate for and serve clients directly, while also building the capacity of the nation's legal aid providers to advance justice and opportunity for their clients.

[www.povertylaw.org](http://www.povertylaw.org)

### **2019 RJI Fellows**

Carmen Ayers, Legal Action of Wisconsin  
Stephani Becker, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Monica Cail, Legal Action of Wisconsin  
Denny Chan, Justice in Aging  
Lyndsay Cutler, New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty  
Karl Doss, Legal Services Corp of VA  
Nolan Downey, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Kerry Ellington, New Haven Legal Assistance Association  
Steven Fischbach, Virginia Aid Justice Center  
Michelle Garcia, New Mexico Legal Aid  
Jennifer Goldberg, Justice in Aging  
Molly Graver, New Mexico Legal Aid  
Susan Ingles, South Carolina Legal Services  
Maria Jankowski, Virginia Indigent Defense Commission  
Amber Johnson, South Carolina Legal Services  
Rochelle Jones, Legal Action of Wisconsin  
Ayanna Jones-Lightsy, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation  
Natalie Kitzrow, Legal Action of Wisconsin  
Andrea Kovach, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Ming-Yee Lin, New Haven Legal Assistance Association  
Tiffany Love, South Carolina Legal Services  
Caitlin Maloney, New Haven Legal Assistance Association  
Alyssa Mercado, New Mexico Legal Aid  
Jonathan Mok, Legal Services Alabama  
Adeola Ogunkeyede, Legal Aid Justice Center  
Militza Pagan, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Olivia Peña, The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights  
Nady Peralta, Legal Aid Justice Center  
Jean Phillips, New Mexico Legal Aid  
Gregory Ramos, Legal Services Alabama  
Holly Ray, Legal Services Alabama  
Nannie Reed, Legal Services Alabama  
Kim Rolla, Legal Aid Justice Center



Danielle Salgado, The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights  
Yvonne Scott, Legal Action of Wisconsin,  
Ashley Shapiro, office of the Public Defender for the City of Richmond  
Whitney Stout, South Carolina Legal Services  
Cole Thaler, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation  
Laurie Weahkee, Native American Voters Alliance  
Nekesha Whitaker, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation  
Shelley White, New Haven Legal Assistance Association  
Shamyia Wyatt, Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation

**2019 RJI Faculty and Coaches Include:**

Aneel Chablani, Chicago Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights  
Emily Coffey, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Ailiana Dennis, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Deb Gardner, Public Justice Center  
Ellen Hemley, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Janerick Holmes, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Alvaro Huerta, National Immigration Law Centre  
Bill Kennedy, Consultant  
Jacki Langum, ArchCity Defenders  
Dorianne Mason, Ohio Justice & Policy Center  
Kimberly Merchant, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Amanda Moore, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law  
Lucy Odigie-Turley, Opportunity Agenda  
Rasheedah Phillips, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia; Sargent Shriver National  
Center on Poverty Law  
Alice Setrini, LAF Chicago  
Steve Sharpe, Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati  
Lorilei Williams, Staten Island Legal Services

