

Steering Committee 2018

Ann Bookman

Director

[Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy](#)



Ann Bookman, a nationally known researcher and policy expert on women's issues, work- family balance and community engagement, is Director of the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at University of Massachusetts Boston. The center works to advance women's public leadership at all levels of government and in the nonprofit sector. Through educational programs and research, the center addresses the needs of a diverse cross-section of women, particularly in the public policy making process.

Denise Schultz

Director

[New England Women's Policy Initiative](#)



Denise Schultz joined the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy in November 2011, after over a decade in the financial services industry, wanting to refocus her career on women's political leadership and public policy. In January 2018, Schultz was named director of the New England Women's Policy Initiative (NEWPI), which is housed at CWPPP. Denise is a graduate of the Gender, Leadership and Public Policy program, an alum of Emerge Massachusetts and Vote Run Lead! and is currently serving as Vice-Chair of the Franklin School Committee. She was the inaugural Chair of the Metrowest Commission on the Status of Women.

Jill E. Ashton

Executive Director

[Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women](#)



Jill Ashton is a leader and activist in the women's advancement community. Since 2009 she has served as the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, an independent state agency that is legislatively charged with reporting on the status of women in the Commonwealth and providing recommendations regarding public policy that would improve women's and girls' access to opportunities and equalities.

Donna Haghighat

Executive Director

[Women's Fund of Western Mass](#)



Donna Haghighat comes to the Women’s Fund with over 12 years of experience developing programs, cultivating relationships, fundraising, directing communications strategy, creating strategic plans and building advocacy programs. Most recently Principal at the Collabyrinth Collective, LLC., Haghighat’s previous roles have included Executive Director of the Aurora Women & Girl’s Foundation, Chief Engagement and Advocacy Officer for YWCA Hartford Region, a strategic consultant, Chief Development Officer for Hartford Public Library, Interim Director and Grants/Program Manager of the Women’s Education and Leadership Fund, and Co-President of AAUW CT.

Kelly Nevins

[Women's Fund of Rhode Island](#)



Kelly Nevins has been a leader in the RI nonprofit sector since 1990, with expertise in strategic development, motivating teams and individuals, workplace equity and community relations tools, program development and public speaking. The Executive Director of the Women's Fund of Rhode Island since 2016, Nevins often speaks about the status of women and girls, why investing in women pays off, and using a gender lens to create systems change.

Sarah Mattson Dustin

Director of Policy

[New Hampshire Women's Foundation](#)



Sarah Mattson Dustin is the Director of Policy at the New Hampshire Women’s Foundation, where she oversees research publications and policy advocacy as well as the Women Run! leadership program. Sarah joined the Women’s Foundation in 2017 after over a decade as a legal aid lawyer and lobbyist with New Hampshire Legal Assistance. At Legal Assistance, Sarah directed the law firm’s legislative and rulemaking advocacy on poverty law issues and spearheaded several successful legislative campaigns.

Tricia Hyacinth

[Fairfield County Foundation for Women and Girls](#)



Tricia joined the Community Foundation in 2012. She's held positions of Associate and Manager. In 2016, she assumed the role of Director of Fund for Women & Girls. As Director, Tricia oversees the Fund's grantmaking portfolio, Family Economic Security Program housed at Housatonic Community College, annual fundraiser and thought leadership initiatives that advance gender equity; and is responsible for increasing the Fund's visibility.

Steven Hernandez

[Connecticut Commission on Women, Children and Seniors](#)



Steven Hernández, Esq. is the executive director for the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors. Mr. Hernández focuses his work on coordinating the state's efforts to enhance equitable access to opportunity for the women, children and seniors of the state. Mr. Hernández previously served the CT state legislature as director of public policy and research for the Connecticut Commission on Children. Prior to joining the Commission, Mr. Hernández served seven years as legislative and budget director in the office of Washington, D.C., Councilmember Jim Graham.

Mary Lee Kiernan

[Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in Connecticut, Inc.](#)



President and CEO has been with YWCA Greenwich since December 2016. She previously served as Chair of the statewide Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, the leading advocate for Connecticut's women and girls for 43 years. Mary Lee also served as the Co-Chair of the Fund for Women and Girls at Fairfield County's Community Foundation, the largest women's fund in New England. With her FWG colleagues, she co-authored the influential study *Holding Up Half the Sky: A Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Fairfield County*. She is a co-founder with FWG of the award-winning Family Economic Security Program at Norwalk Community College.

Rae’Nique K. Victorine

Fellow

IGNITE



Rae’Nique is a senior at Simmons University where she was the founding Vice-President and later President of the Simmons African Caribbean Student Union and served on her Student Government Association (SGA) as the Academic Affairs Officer. As an intern at Emerge Massachusetts and through local campaign work, Rae’Niqua realized her passion to educate women on how to run for office. Rae’Niqua plans to run for office in Massachusetts and later move up the political ladder to serve those living in U.S. territories.

Sara Guillermo

Chief Program Officer

IGNITE



Sara has extensive experience in youth leadership, curriculum development, and program management having developed and led youth empowerment and community service programs at BuildOn and Aspire Public Schools for a decade prior to joining IGNITE. Sara started with IGNITE managing their high school programs and was quickly recruited to administer statewide and then national programming. Under Sara’s leadership, IGNITE has refined and developed new programs and brought them to an ever-expanding audience of young women across the country.

Amy Zucchero

Chief of Resource Development and Communications

IGNITE



Amy joined IGNITE in 2015 to spearhead efforts to raise the capital needed to dramatically expand young women’s political leadership programming across the country. She has over 15+ years of experience championing women’s rights. As a member of The Representation Project’s founding team, she helped raise significant funds and national attention for the organization’s efforts to challenge the media’s portrayal of women and girls. She was also instrumental in raising production funding for the organization’s documentary *The Mask You Live In*.

Cary Brown

Executive Director

[Vermont's Commission on Women](#)



Cary Brown has been working to increase opportunities for women and girls in Vermont for over two decades. She became the Executive Director of the Vermont Commission on Women in 2012, after being appointed twice as a member of the commission. She has worked in gender equity in education in both K-12 and higher education; run award-winning summer trades and technology camps for girls; served at the helm of a child care center; and is a Justice of the Peace.

Valerie Bassett

Executive Director

[Women's Fund of Southeastern Massachusetts](#)



Valerie Bassett began her career as an early educator with toddlers at a Bright Horizon center and then served a battered women's sheltering organization as a development associate. Valerie brought a passion for health equity to her subsequent role as director of Policy and Research at the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation and then as executive director of the Massachusetts Public Health Association, an education and advocacy organization. In her current position leading the Women's Fund of Southeastern MA towards its goal of increasing economic security for women, she combines feminism with a drive for economic justice and love of this region and its people.

Marianne Moore

[Maine's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women](#)



Through a partnership between Healthy Acadia and the Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center, Marianne works with individuals, families and healthcare providers to address the myriad, often complex barriers to short/long term care faced by cancer patients in Washington County. Marianne is available to help address barriers including but not limited to: financial/economic assistance; health/healthcare literacy; health insurance navigation; access to transportation; connection to social/support networks and systems; and access to resources that support healthy diets and lifestyle habits to complement individual treatment and recovery protocols. She works with partners to create a robust, dynamic system that will help ensure cancer patients receive culturally competent care that is confidential, respectful, compassionate, and mindful of the patient's safety.

Holly Hover

[Maine's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women](#)



Holly Stover is a resident of Boothbay, Maine. She is currently running for the Maine State House of Representatives for District 89. Ms. Stover is the Executive Director for Lincoln County Dental; a low-income dental program. She also is the Program Director for the Addiction Outreach Program in Boothbay Harbor where she works with local law enforcement to address the treatment needs of people living with opiate use disorders. She is very active in the community and serves on five local boards that provide critical health, social services and educational programming to the local area. Ms. Stover worked for more than two decades in Maine State Government where she served in several executive leadership positions.

Amy Gallant

[Maine's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women](#)



Amy Regan Gallant is the Advocacy Director for AARP Maine. Prior to AARP, Amy had the honor of being the Advocacy Director for Preble Street, coordinating Homeless Voices for Justice and the Maine Hunger Initiative. She is the Chair of Maine's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, and is an active volunteer in the running and biking community. Amy has a degree in Political Science from Saint Anselm College, a Masters in Global Affairs from New York University, and is currently pursuing an MBA at USM. She is from Buxton, a graduate of Saint Patrick's School and McAuley High School, and lives in South Portland with her husband and their many bicycles

Denise Muro

Program Coordinator

[New England Women's Policy Initiative](#)



Denise Muro is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Conflict Resolution, Human Security, and Global Governance in the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Her research explores social relations and social cohesion among resettled refugees and host communities in the context of Boston and Berlin, and she is interested in how race, gender, and foreign status impact social integration in the United States and Europe. She has several years of experience working with and advocating for asylum seekers and refugees, and she is on the Executive Board of RefugeesWelcome! a nonprofit that acts as a capacity building and networking platform for migrant service providers in the Boston area. Denise also works as a Program Coordinator for the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at UMass Boston.

Jeniffer Vivar-Wong

Program Coordinator

[New England Women's Policy Initiative](#)



Jeniffer is a DACA recipient from Guatemala. She is currently a junior doing a major in Business Management with a concentration in Accounting and a major in Latin American and Iberian Studies with a translations track. She is a Program Coordinator for the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy where she provides direct support to the New England Women's Policy Conference and the Fellowship Program for Distinguished Public Service Leaders. She is also an intern as the Immigrant Student Coordinator, with Multicultural Student Affairs Office where she has created resources and programs for immigrant students. She is passionate about creating programs that will uplift and strengthen minorities and underprivileged communities.