

Portia Allen-Kyle

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Experience

Council of State Governments Justice Center/Deputy Division Director, State Initiatives

2021 – PRESENT

- Manage a team of 15 staff and a multi-million-dollar budget for three federal and foundation-funded projects with an equity and civil rights focus.
- Curate team culture through the transparent and inclusive development of equitable internal policies and procedures, including the development and launch of division-wide trainings on equity analyses and the contours of constitutional criminal justice and civil rights policy.
- Evaluate current organizational approaches to long-standing state division work to identify equity opportunities in conceptualization and implementation.
 - Deliver internal staff training on race equity and civil rights analyses in policymaking, including how to spot issues, identify stakeholders, and interrogate assumptions towards more inclusive proposals and recommendations to states.
 - Drive reconsideration of recommendations around the use of risk assessment to identify and reconcile potential places for bias to enter.
- Drive progress towards project deliverables, maintaining accountability for quality control and workflow processes.
 - Develop trainings for legislators and their staff on how to use data to inform equitable law and policy proposals that reduce disparities and promote civil rights, and implement quarterly stakeholder engagement process for Justice Counts project.
 - Recruit and advise 7 state correctional or supervision agencies on the adoption of policies that promote individual liberty and freedom through an emphasis on supervision support and success.
 - Advise Lantern project on how to utilize data for equitable performance benchmarking of front-line officers in two states.
- Scope new projects by analyzing political landscapes and cultivating relationships with local stakeholders to identify needs and craft equity-driven solutions.
 - Coach the Massachusetts judiciary through the creation of a task force to address documented profound racial disparities and systemic racism in decisions regarding sentencing, probation, and diversion.

FuturaBold/Principal and Owner

2020 – PRESENT

- Customized social impact, equity, and civil rights-driven consulting strategies and special projects for companies, candidates, and causes.
- Recent engagements:
 - Equity audit for Mobilization for Justice, a mid-size legal services nonprofit, advising senior leadership and the Board and driving organizational change process to align policies and procedures with principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Coached staff committees on the development of equitable practices; the launching of employee affinity groups; and the infusion of race equity into client representation and direct service legal work, specifically how to build bridges into communities and develop collaborative legal strategies on pressing civil rights and civil legal issues.
 - Managed issue advocacy and political endorsements for Win The Era PAC, including 49 candidate wins in the 2020 cycle, and executing a speaker series on marquee issues with an average audience of over 500 people.
 - Advised The Bail Project on the constitutionality and civil rights implications of changes to pretrial procedure in legislative and administrative policies in 13 states.
 - Recommended organizational position statements on pretrial procedures with civil rights implications on privacy and liberty.

- Developed the policy platform, and managed messaging and engagement for the first Black woman to be elected to City Council in Culver City, California. The platform was focused on equity in transportation, housing, economic development, and policing.
- Conducted office-wide training for Middlesex County District Attorney's office in Massachusetts district attorneys on identifying and combatting bias in police reporting and prosecutorial practices and advancing civil rights.
- Served on the drafting team of the Movement for Black Lives' Breathe Act, a federal legislative proposal that centers the needs of Black communities in the funding and provision of public safety, that includes holistic recommendations to protect and expand civil rights in federal criminal law and grant program incentives for states to promote community health and well-being.

Voting Rights Lab

2019 – 2021

DIRECTOR OF POLICY INNOVATION (Dec. 2020 – Jan. 2021)

- Co-authored white paper on civil rights concerns of algorithmic bias in voter verification, including the potential to disenfranchise young voters, voters who are recent citizens, and voters with disabilities.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF LAW AND POLICY (Dec. 2019 – Nov. 2020)

- Developed policy proposals and legislative strategy on ballot access, voter restoration, COVID-19 response, and other civil rights issues across progressive and conservative landscapes in 8 states.
 - Influenced California regulation that adopted a process safeguarding voters who cast their ballots by mail from having their signatures, and thus their ballots, rejected.
 - Encouraged state departments of labor to exempt poll worker pay from calculations for unemployment compensation, thus helping address staffing shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Authored a cure process tool kit for county election clerks in Wisconsin for use by coalition members during the 2020 primary and general election cycle.
- Analyzed bill proposals and advised on constitutional and civil rights implications, especially the impact on disenfranchisement of communities of color and other under-resourced communities.
 - Advised coalition partners in Iowa on a constitutional amendment (and subsequent executive order) on voter restoration.
 - Advised the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition on the implications of both litigation and legislative action on the ability of people with convictions who owe legal financial obligations to vote.
 - Analyzed state law on polling places in 15 states about the civil rights implications of using sports arenas as polling places during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the potential impact on wait times at polling places and the potential disenfranchisement of Black voters.
- Created blue-sky vision for organizational policy positions to protect and expand the fundamental right to vote, including policies on ballot cure processes (i.e., the ability to correct your ballot), waiting times for polling places, poll worker recruitment, siting of polling places, and the ability to vote by mail.
- Partnered across teams to develop and execute state-level communications, partnerships, and field strategies to expand civil rights and promote social justice.

Pete for America/Policy Advisor and Chair, Civil Rights and Social Justice Policy Committee

2019-2020

- Advised and briefed the principal, Democratic Presidential Candidate Pete Buttigieg, including targeted strategy on civil rights and racial justice-oriented messaging and outreach. Provided rapid response to media, fact checkers, and surveys on key policy issues.
 - Framed the original racial justice and criminal justice policy prongs for the campaign launch and website rollout.
 - Briefings included substantive civil rights issues, as well as equity-driven proposals, culturally competent responses, and messaging (e.g., op-eds, speech content, talking points, debate prep, interviews, etc.) on racial and social justice.
 - Analyzed policy proposals of other candidates, noting points of alignment and distinction.
 - Provided feedback and guidance on the release of every domestic policy platform release by the campaign, proposing value edits that ensured that each is inclusive and promotes racial equity, civil rights, social justice, and the campaign's core message of belonging.
- Co-architect of signature *Douglass Plan* platform, as well as the criminal justice and Tribal Nations platforms.

- The Douglass Plan, in particular, changed the national conversation on racial justice policy in the 2020 presidential election cycle and forced the field to center the interests of Black constituents in their policy proposals.
- Led a volunteer team of over 30 policy experts to support campaign staff, analyzing pressing civil rights issues and making recommendations on positions, talking points, or other campaign needs.
- Cultivated behind-the-scenes relationships with policy experts and constituent stakeholders, including academics, advocates, and practitioners.
- Represented campaign at surrogate events, including media interviews, panels, and one-on-one conversations on race equity issues critical to communities of color.

American Civil Liberties Union

2016 – 2019

ADVOCACY AND POLICY COUNSEL, ACLU – NATIONAL OFFICE (Sept. 2018 – Dec. 2019)

- Devised national policy and legislative strategy on civil rights, focusing on pretrial justice and bail reform issues and collaborated with legal and campaign teams to execute, playing a significant role passing 6 bills and blocking 6 bills in 10 states.
 - Includes working to pass a bill on algorithmic transparency in pretrial risk assessment in Idaho aimed to prevent automated discrimination in release and detention decisions in Idaho; a prohibition on the setting of cash bail for municipal offenses in Colorado; and the defeat of a constitutional amendment expanding the detention net and, thus, infringing on pretrial liberty in Alabama.
 - Authored “A New Vision for Pretrial Justice” outlining the ACLU’s blue-sky vision and pretrial policy objectives that informed the federal and state-level work.
 - Advised the staff and leadership of over 25 affiliates nationwide on constitutionality and intersecting civil rights implications of pretrial legislative proposals, including providing expert testimony to legislatures in Colorado, Illinois, and Oklahoma.
 - Executed two convenings of affiliated nationwide advocates on pretrial strategy and fostered an ongoing learning community to provide resources and discuss and troubleshoot issues across political landscapes.
- Managed project to craft a long-term comprehensive strategy to challenge racism within the criminal system and promote civil rights.
 - Advised state affiliates on the development, legality, and racial justice implications of policy positions.
 - Developed and launched a strategy for challenging racism in the criminal legal system focused of five pillars: disrupting the school to prison pipeline and enhancing juvenile justice; economic justice; divesting from law enforcement and carceral systems and investing in community supports and services; reentry; and changes to criminal legal doctrine and sentencing practices.
- Conducted workshops on how white supremacy manifests in office culture, driving internal racial justice and equity conversation across the organization.

POLICY DIRECTOR, ACLU OF ALABAMA (Apr. 2018 – Jun. 2018)

- Raised the affiliate’s profile and legitimacy as a resource to both policymakers and the public by implementing a non-litigation advocacy strategy through a racial justice lens and building relationships with key legislators and community partners to advance civil rights.
 - Advise local police department on the adoption of body-worn camera policies that balance privacy interests with the need for public accountability for law enforcement.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRANSPARENCY FELLOW, ACLU OF NEW JERSEY (Jun. 2016 – Mar. 2018)

- Executed integrated advocacy strategy for civil rights, criminal justice reform, open government, racial and economic justice, and voting rights through stakeholder meetings, media, and testimony before the New Jersey Legislature.
 - Executed a multi-strategy approach to amplify reentry initiatives by co-authoring an op-ed on legislative barriers to reentry, and submitting testimony to the New Jersey Legislature on the consequences of a lack of civic engagement for people with criminal convictions.
 - Conducted first analysis of the impact of felony disenfranchisement on the electorate – specifically, on local election turnout and outcomes – setting the stage for coalition work on re-enfranchisement of people with convictions on probation and parole, which was achieved in 2020.
 - Proposed a uniform policy on early warning systems for prosecutors to identify problematic behaviors from law enforcement and allow for intervention. This policy received buy-in and support from the state prosecutor’s association, a version of which was adopted by offices across the state.

- Advised coalition advocating for housing rights for people facing foreclosure, including drafting legislative recommendations, co-organizing a lobbying day, and testifying on the disparate impact of foreclosure practices on poor communities and communities of color across the state.
- Authored report on school to prison pipeline, examining civil rights implications at the intersections of education and law enforcement, religious freedom, first amendments rights, privacy, and child welfare.
 - Developed an accompanying position statement on civil rights concerns facing schools and their students, as well as recommendations on ideal school-level and district-level policies to address these concerns and protect and expand students' rights.
 - Authored testimony delivered to the New Jersey State Board of Education on civil rights implications of Memoranda of Agreement between school districts and local law enforcement agencies.
- Authored report on juvenile diversionary programs resulting in extensive media coverage and a statewide conversation, laying the foundation for the 2020 NJ Attorney General Directive on juvenile diversion.
- Developed and executed a multi-prong strategy addressing discrimination against people with convictions.
 - Represented client in administrative hearings in front of a state licensing board highlighting the discrimination against a former client whose professional license was being withheld solely because they had a previous criminal conviction.
 - Testified in front of the New Jersey Supreme Court in support of expanding access to the legal profession to people with convictions and people with histories of mental health treatment.

Rutgers University

2012-2017

LECTURER (Jun. 2012 – Aug. 2017)

- Designed and instructed undergraduate courses on: Law & Society (5 semesters); Race Relations (2 semesters); Sociological Analysis of Social Problems (1 semester); Criminology (2 semesters); Mass Communication in Modern Society (2 semesters); and Introduction to Sociology (2 semesters).
- Course sizes ranged from seminars of 30 students or less, to large lectures of over 200 students.

PROGRAM FELLOW, ERIC NEISSER PUBLIC INTEREST PROGRAM (Jan. 2016 – May 2016)

- Authored "Pro Bono Handbook" to help students navigate public interest and civil rights opportunities.
- Counseled students on public interest career paths and coordinated selection process for institutional fellowships.

PROJECT CONSULTANT – DIVERSITY INITIATIVES – THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEWARK (SEPT. 2012 – AUG. 2013)

- Developed strategy for an initiative aimed to improve opportunities for diverse graduate students through targeted efforts of recruitment, retention, and support for a working group of faculty and institutional leadership.
- Grant writing and proposal development for internal funding sources and external foundations in support of institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

PROGRAM ASSISTANT – STREET LAW PROGRAM, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW-NEWARK (AUG. 2010 – SEPT. 2012)

- Recruited, coordinated, and managed working relationships to expand school-year program to include over 25 volunteer facilitators and 15 partner sites each semester.
- Updated model curriculum to reflect civil rights and social issues relevant to youth, including free speech on social media, school privacy expectations, family visitation, and laws covering tenants' rights and eviction.
- Designed and implemented curriculum covering issues of civil rights and youth justice for a full-day summer program for underserved high school students.

Office of Julio Sanchez, Esq./Law Clerk

2013

- Performed legal research on social security laws and regulations.
- Assisted in guiding clients in the filing of expungements, including corresponding with multiple agencies to obtain records.
- Assisted in drafting appellate briefs and court documents in preparation for administrative hearings and civil litigation.

National Center for Children in Poverty/Research Assistant/Writer
2008 – 2011

- Reviewed and synthesized over 1,200 research articles for access through *Research Connections*, an early childhood social policy research database, emphasizing the acquisition of research addressing equitable access to opportunities for children of color and children from underserved communities.

Other Past Experience

St. Thomas Aquinas College, Adjunct Faculty (2013-2015) • New York City Department of Education's Periodic Assessment Team, Consultant/Education Pioneers Fellow (2012) • Advocates for Children of New Jersey, Legal Intern/Deborah T. Poritz Public Interest Fellow (2011) • Target Corporation, Assets Protection Specialist (2003-2009)

Education

Juris Doctor/Rutgers University School of Law – Newark, NJ
Bar Admission: State of New Jersey
Journal: Women's Rights Law Reporter

Ph.D. Candidate (A.B.D.), Sociology/Rutgers University – New Brunswick, NJ
Concentration: Race/Ethnicity; Experiences of Law; Social Control

Master of Arts in African-American Studies/Columbia University, New York, NY
Concentration: Social Policy and Urban Centers

Bachelor of Arts, Economics & Africana Studies/Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA

Selected Publications & Public Scholarship

Woods, A. & Allen-Kyle, P. 2019. "A New Vision for Pretrial Justice in the United States." *White Paper*, American Civil Liberties Union. • Allen-Kyle, P. 2018. "Missed Opportunities: Youth Diversionary Programs in New Jersey." *Report*, American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey. • Allen-Kyle, P. & Livengood, R. (May 10, 2017), "ACLU to Christie: Where are people with criminal records supposed to work?," *Star Ledger*. • Allen-Kyle, P., (Oct. 20, 2016), "Letter: Deaths at hands of police not just 'unfortunate'," Asbury Park Press. • Allen-Kyle, P. 2015. "Women at the Forefront: Laissez-Faire Sexism, Mother Blaming, and Parental Responsibility Laws." *Women's Rights Law Reporter*, 36, 164-205. • Allen-Kyle, P. 2014. "Not in My Backyard: An Examination of Suburban Gentrification as a Tool for Combatting Poverty." In *The War on Poverty: A Retrospective* (K. Farmbry, ed.). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. • Allen-Kyle, P. & Parello, N. 2011. "Food for Thought: Expanding School Breakfast to NJ Students." *Report*, Advocates for Children of New Jersey.

Service & Honors

Garden State Bar Association, Young Lawyer's Division Top 25 Under 40 Recognition (2021) • Council of Urban Professionals, Fellows Alumni Council (2021 – Present) • Sur Legal Collaborative, Board President (2020-Present) • Count Us Indiana, Board Member (2020-Present) • Higher Heights Executive Leadership Fellowship (2020) • Council of Urban Professionals Fellow (2019) • Congressional Black Caucus Institute's Political Leadership Development Program (2019) • Urban Resource Institute, Board Trustee Vice Chair (2013-2019) • Racial Justice Training Institute, Organizational Team Leader (2017) • Rutgers University Black Lawyers Alumni Network, Vice Chair & Co-Founder • Civilian Complaint Review Board of Newark, New Jersey, Appointee (2016-2018)

Presentations

On Law

- Unpacking Racial Equity (Invited Panelist for Webinar) – AdaptiveX** 2021
This conversation covered the promise of President Biden’s executive order on racial equity in the field of education.
- Voter Suppression, Civic Engagement, and Coalition Building (Invited Panelist for CLE) – Emory University’s 2020 EPIC Conference – A Hundred Years and Counting: The Ongoing Fight for Voting Rights** 2020
This panel conversation amongst seasoned civil rights attorneys focused on the fight to protect and expand voting rights through policy and legislation, litigation, and activism and community-based support strategies.
- Pioneering Social Justice Lawyers Speaker Series (Inaugural Invited Speaker) – Rutgers University School of Law, Office of Public Interest Program** 2020
- The Importance of Student Voting (Invited Panelist) – Indiana University-Bloomington Kelley School of Business, Office of Diversity and Inclusion** 2020
This panel discussed the mechanics of voting for college students in Indiana, as well as national trends on suppression, registration and outreach.
- Absentee Voting in a Pandemic (Invited Workshop) – Indianapolis Public Library** 2020
This workshop informed participants laws on absentee voting in Indiana, as well as national trends.
- Engaging the Community on Racial Justice (Invited Panelist) - United Methodist Women of New Jersey** 2020
This conversation addressed how to engage in community-centered policymaking and advocacy through a racial justice lens.
- Structural Racialization (Invited Facilitator) – Shriver Center on Poverty Law, Racial Justice Training Institute 2020 Cohort Kick-off** 2020
This facilitated conversation covered structural racialization and how to identify the operation of racism at individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels.
- National Landscape of Pretrial Justice Reform (Invited Lecture and Workshop) – Marquette University** 2019
This presentation addressed the importance of narrative shift from ‘bail’ reform to ‘pretrial justice’ reform, surgical approaches to legislative change, and a national landscape of pretrial litigation and legislation.
- Pretrial Release: Examining a ‘Least Restrictive Conditions’ Requirement in Practice (Invited Workshop) – Pretrial Justice Institute, Biannual PI-Con** 2019

This workshop engaged pretrial practitioners and advocates to explore what is meant by requiring the ‘least restrictive’ conditions of pretrial release and how that requires an individual determination.

Do We Really Want to End Cash Bail? – American Bar Association, Section on State and Local Government Annual Spring Meeting 2019

This presentation gave an overview of the current state of play of pretrial reform, arguing that the emphasis on cash bail as the reason why pretrial processes are fundamentally unfair is misplaced and proposing that we tackle whole system reform, eliminating the profit motive, but keeping cash bail as a tool of release.

Looking In the Mirror Instead of Out the Window: Confronting White Supremacy at the ACLU (Lecture and Workshop) – American Civil Liberties Union Biannual Staff Conference 2019

This interactive presentation interrogated whether internal dynamics and workplace culture perpetuates manifestations of white supremacy both internally and in our external work. This presentation was also given at the ACLU of Colorado (invited lecture and workshop).

New Jersey’s School to Prison Pipeline (Invited Panelist) - Rutgers Law School, Conference on Detention and Mass Incarceration of Children of Color 2018

Presented an analysis about how specific K-12 climate and disciplinary policies disproportionately target Black and Brown students and filter them into the school-to-prison pipeline and the child welfare system.

Gender Identity in Criminal and Immigration Settings (CLE Presentation) – New Jersey State Bar Association & the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education 2018

This presentation educated participants about potential legal issues concerning gender identity in institutional settings, such as for criminal incarceration or immigration offenses.

Justice in New Jersey’s Schools: Key Factors in the School to Prison Pipeline (Invited Presentation & Workshop) – March for Racial Justice-New Jersey 2017

Delivered comprehensive presentation about findings from an investigation into the school to prison pipeline and racial injustice in the state’s K-12 school system. Conducted a workshop for more than 200 participants on how to request access to their school district’s data through targeted public records requests.

So You Got the Win, Now What? Building Effective Civilian Oversight Entities – National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Annual Meeting 2017

Organized a panel of advocates and practitioners from across the country on the stages of building and launching a civilian oversight board or agency after a grassroots or legislative campaign win.

Moving New Jersey’s Communities Forward: A Critical Conversation about Race and Policing (Invited Panelist) – New Jersey Institute for Social Justice 2016

Provided commentary on the state of relations between community and law enforcement and how to build community trust on a legacy of racial injustice and distrust.

- Women at the Forefront: An Examination of Laissez-Faire Sexism through Disparate Exposure of Mothers to Liability under Parental Responsibility Statutes — Oxford Women’s Leadership Symposium** 2013
- Authored and presented the history and development of theories of liability underlying parental responsibility laws arguing that such laws are the result of a laissez-faire approach to gender relations and sexism that disproportionately impacts women by exposing them to liability and perpetuating “mother blaming.”
- Between Hopwood and Fisher: Diversity and Racial Considerations in Graduate Education — Yale University, 10th Annual Bouchet Conference on Diversity and Graduate Education** 2013
- Co-authored and presented content analysis of high court decisions in affirmative action litigation from 1996 through the present, including recommendations for graduate schools to recruit diverse students.
- On Sociology**
- The Social Patterns of Police Killings (Lightning Talk) - American Society of Criminology Annual Conference** 2019
- This presentation discussed findings from a preliminary study using a theoretical lens that incorporates situational homicide, stereotype threat, and implicit bias to describe the patterns of demographic and situational circumstances of police killings.
- Commentary on the Documentary Screening of *Unapologetically Black* (Invited Panelist) - Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Conference** 2016
- Provided commentary on the sociohistorical and legal context of a documentary film highlighting the July 2015 Movement for Black Lives Convening in Cleveland, Ohio. The presentation focused on the salience of race in policing tactics and the monitoring of activism and mobilization.
- Controlling the Movement: Exploring the Dynamic of Activism and Policing Tactics in Greater St. Louis (Invited Lecture) - St. Francis College** 2015
- Authored and presented preliminary findings from field observations of protest activities surrounding the one-year anniversary of the killing of Michael Brown conducted in the Greater St. Louis during August 2015.
- Controlling the Movement: Exploring the Dynamic of Activism and Policing Tactics in Greater St. Louis (Panel Presentation) - American Society of Criminology Annual Conference** 2015
- (See above description). Moderated panel on police practices and use of force.
- The Demographic Origins of Curfew Laws: A Longitudinal Hazard Analysis (Roundtable) - American Sociological Association Annual Conference** 2015
- Authored and presented findings from an empirical study testing the role of social threat on the risk of adopting juvenile curfew ordinances, a formal control mechanism.
- Racial Demographic Change and Municipal Lawmaking (Poster, Honorable Mention) – Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Fall Research Conference** 2014
- Authored and presented an empirical study about the role of racial demographic change in the adoption of a juvenile curfew ordinance.