



The Philanthropy HUB at the
Santa Fe Community Foundation presents:

**New Mexico Women of Color Nonprofit
Leadership Initiative**

The Team:



Dr. Mi'Jan Celie Tho-Biaz, Ed.D., is an oral historian and restorative storyteller who shapes narratives of personal transformation and community change. As the founder and director of the New Mexico Women of Color Nonprofit Leadership Initiative at the Santa Fe Community Foundation, she works with communities across the themes of sovereignty, transformation, healing and liberation.

Mi'Jan is also a public speaker, represented by FRESH Speakers alongside luminaries like Alicia Garza, Ai-jen Poo and Brittney Cooper. She graces audiences with her visionary, story-rich talks at a

range of institutions, from Carnegie Hall to the Institute of American Indian Arts, to SXSW. Her goal? To make the historical contemporary and personal, while surfacing the marginalized stories that need to be heard.

To say this historian's own history is distinguished is an understatement: Mi'Jan designed and led the Steinem Initiative's public policy digital storytelling pilot at Smith College, was a visiting scholar at the Interdisciplinary Center for Innovative Theory and Empirics at Columbia University, and is a Kennedy Center Citizen Artist. These days, her collaborations include serving as a BMW Foundation Responsible Leader, and inaugural investor in the Angel Syndicate Black philanthropist community.

Photo courtesy of Jati Lindsay

Gabrielle Uballez has 20-years of experience working in community-based arts, nonprofits, and philanthropy. Uballez currently consults for the Asset Funders Network – where she contributes to national race equity programming and leads regional efforts toward collective action to achieve economic justice and dignity for all New Mexicans. She is also the co-facilitator for the New Mexico Women of Color Nonprofit Leadership Initiative founded by Dr. Mi'Jan Celie Tho-Biaz.



Uballez formerly served as the Executive Director of Working Classroom, a youth arts organization that amplifies historically ignored voices, resists systemic injustices, and imagines a more equitable society, of which she is an alumnus. She previously served as the Special Projects Associate at the Studio Museum in Harlem and the National Program Director for the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture.

In 2018, she was appointed by Mayor Timothy Keller to the City of Albuquerque Urban Enhancement Trust Fund committee and was elected as chairperson, where she has led dialogue and action toward equitable access to public funding for underserved communities. She has served a repeat grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts. In 2019 she was elected to the ACLU of New Mexico's board of directors and in 2021 was elected to the ACLU national board of directors as the New Mexico Affiliate representative.

Uballez earned her B.A. from Pomona College, a certificate from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Non-Profit Leaders. She lives and works in downtown Albuquerque, in a 100-year-old home, with her husband and their two young Chinese-Chicanx children.

Testimonials:

“When I applied, I honestly did not think I deserved it...who was I to think of myself as a “leader?” But the opportunity was too enticing to resist. What I had intended to learn were basic leadership skills-- how to write a grant, public speaking skills, team management. What I learned was how to stand in my own melanin and power! During the last session, I had this overwhelming feeling of belonging, not just with the cohort, but in my skin, as a Woman of Color leader. I know that moving forward, I now own my power, my voice and this path of servant leadership.”

-Attiana Virella-Fuentes, NM SFPS Adelante Program

“I was seeking a connection to other Women of Color in the nonprofit sector, a mentor, and knowledge about how to authentically lead. I am now connected to Women of Color who I love and respect, I have a fabulous mentor, and I know exactly how I want my voice and skills to ripple through the nonprofit sector. Most notably, I embraced a deeply meaningful life shift that probably wouldn't have happened if it were not for this program. I now know and feel the beauty and strength of doing things together with others, versus doing them by myself.”

-Kira Luna, New Mexico Child Advocacy Networks, Director of Engagement

“I think one of the most influential experiences an emerging Woman of Color leader can have is being part of a group that supports their vision. Oftentimes, young, emerging Women of Color leaders in the nonprofit sector have to deal with people questioning their intelligence and it can be extremely exhausting. I would tell an emerging leader to apply to the cohort in order to meet supportive, like-minds while also learning how to redesign definitions and practices in leadership. In order to lead, we do not need to emulate toxic models. In addition, I would share that the Initiative takes a positively unique approach to planning and building a leadership and mentorship path.”

-Hanna Negusie, Academy for the Love of Learning

“I applied to the NM Women of Color Nonprofit Leadership Initiative because I was looking for community--even though New Mexico's population is a majority people of color, I am constantly surprised by how few people of color (and especially Women of Color) I see in leadership roles, including in the nonprofit sector. As a young leader in this industry, it was crucial for me to find women I could look up to who validated and reflected my experiences in the world. This, and more, is what I found in the cohort.”

And also:

“Whenever women of color are connected and validated, they are able to effect change far beyond their immediate professional realm. I think on a more ideological level, this cohort validates the crucial position of women of color in the nonprofit sector, and the crucial recognition that our experiences are different and that we need a space that is by us and for us.”

-Jordan Bosiljevac, Breakthrough Santa Fe Associate Director

“I assume that I came into nonprofit work like many individuals: to serve a purpose, to address a need, and to fill a gap. What I was seeking was to provide community driven care to fill in the known gaps around birth, motherhood, and parenting. What I learned is that leading this work requires a set of skills that need careful development and a circle of people who support me as I develop them. The

NM Women of Color Nonprofit Leadership Initiative reaffirmed my ideas of creating an eco-system of support while I find my place in leadership. Before I was part of this cohort, it wasn't clear who those people were and where to place them. This alone opened up alot for me, because I wish to support others in their leadership development."

-Nicolle L. Gonzales, Changing Woman Initiative Founder & Executive Director

"I would most definitely encourage other WOC to take part in this program. I would tell them that the opportunity to share, learn, reflect and network is invaluable to their work in the community, but perhaps more important, a gift to their own well-being. The time I have spent on self-reflection and the realization of what I need as a Woman of Color will only serve to make me stronger. This impacts my work in the community, and also makes me a better person. I love thinking about the legacy I want to leave."

-Inez Jiron Leibman Mesa to Mesa - Home Repair from the Heart Española, New Mexico