



Presenter and Staff Biographies

Surveying the Field: Mapping a Path Towards Better Outcomes for Systems-Involved Youth
An AYPF Discussion Group | March 29, 2019

Carl Ayers

**Director, Division of Family Services
Virginia Department of Social Services**

Carl Ayers joined the Virginia Department of Social Services as the Director of the Division of Family Services in July 2014. The Division of Family Services is responsible for the supervision of the Child Protective Services, Foster Care, Adoption, Prevention Services, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance and Title IV-E programs for Virginia. Prior to joining the Virginia Department of Social Services, Carl held a number of positions with local departments of social services. Most recently, he served as the Director of the Floyd County Department of Social Services from 2004-2014. Carl has more than 21 years' experience in the child welfare system. Throughout his distinguished career, he has held numerous leadership positions at the local, state and national levels.

Presently, Carl serves as Chair of the Interagency Partnership to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness for the Commonwealth of Virginia and is on the Executive Committee for the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators. Carl is also a Board member of the Child Welfare League of America. He is leading Virginia's implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act and he has led Virginia's Three Branch Initiative to reduce child fatalities and Virginia's statewide study involving Substance Exposed Infants with a focus on how Virginia can improve its response to children and families impacted by Substance Abuse. Carl holds a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from Radford University and is a graduate of the Virginia Executive Institute as well as the Commonwealth Management Institute.

Julie Breedlove

**Managing Director, Communities and Priorities
Capacity Building Center for States**

Julie Breedlove serves as the Capacity Building Center for States' Managing Director for Priorities and Communities. Ms. Breedlove has more than 20 years' experience in child welfare workforce development, training, curriculum development, coaching, evaluation, continuous quality improvement, and implementation of practice and systemic changes. Prior to her role at the Center, Ms. Breedlove served as an Organizational Effectiveness consultant with the American Public Human Services Association and served as the Training Director for Georgia's Division of Family and Children Services. Ms. Breedlove earned her Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Georgia and her undergraduate Social Work degree from Auburn University.



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Linda Dixon, Ph.D.

**Administrator, Family, Adolescent, and Children's Services
Connecticut Department of Children and Families**

Linda Dixon, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical child psychologist who has served the Department of Children and Families since 2002 as a clinician, supervisor, and senior administrator. Prior to her work in Connecticut Linda worked for New York's Office of Mental Health. She received a Bachelor's with distinction in all subjects from Cornell University and completed her doctoral fellowship training at Yale.

Jesse Kannam

Policy Associate

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Jesse Kannam joined AYPF in 2017. She supports the conceptualization, preparation, and execution of a variety of learning events and products for policymakers. Jesse works on projects related to alternative education, accountability, access to postsecondary and workforce opportunities for youth involved in foster care and the juvenile justice system, and out-of-school time learning. Jesse holds a Bachelor's degree in American Studies and a certificate in Community Action and Public Policy from Connecticut College. Prior to AYPF, Jesse worked as a junior associate in the enrollment office of DC Public Schools, as part of their Urban Education Leaders Internship Program, and as an intern in the Housing Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services.

The Honorable Hiram Puig-Lugo

Judge, Board of Directors, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Hiram E. Puig-Lugo was appointed to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia in 1999 by President William J. Clinton. He was born in San Germán, Puerto Rico, and is equally fluent in English and Spanish. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School, where he was the first Latino member of the Wisconsin Law Review. After law school, he served as staff attorney for the Public Defender Service of the District of Columbia for eight years and as trial attorney for the US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Criminal Section for three years. As a judge, he has handled criminal felony, juvenile delinquency, criminal misdemeanor, child abuse and neglect, domestic relations, Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS), and domestic violence calendars. From 2014 to 2016, he served as Presiding Judge of the Family Court. Judge Puig-Lugo has taught at legal education projects throughout Central America, South America, Spain, and the Federated States of Micronesia. He has worked as adjunct faculty at the American University Washington College of Law, the University of the District of Columbia School of Law, the George Washington University Law School, and the National Judicial College Pacific Islands Law Institute. Judge Puig-Lugo is a US representative to The Hague Judicial Network, which works to implement The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. The DC Bar Family Law Section recognized Judge Puig-Lugo in 2015 for his leadership to the Court and service to District of Columbia residents. He received the Judicial Leadership Award from the Hispanic National Bar Foundation in 2014, and the Honorable Ricardo M. Urbina Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia in 2011. He has served on the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Board of Directors since 2014.



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Samaura Stone
Senior Policy Associate
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Samaura Stone joined AYPF in 2018. Prior to joining AYPF, she was a policy analyst at the Aspen Institute where she focused on elevating two-generation approaches to improve social and economic outcomes for children and families. Her experiences include working as a congressional legislative fellow in the offices of Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (NY) and Representative Karen Bass (CA-37).

Originally from Oregon, she received her master of social work degree with a concentration in Organizational Leadership and Management from Portland State University. Prior to and during graduate school, she held positions with nonprofit organizations, government, and school districts, including working for several years as a Community Liaison for U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley (OR) in his state office.

As a former direct-practice social worker, Samaura has advocated for various populations; including foster youth, formerly incarcerated women, families experiencing housing insecurities, and individuals impacted by mental health and substance abuse disorders. She is a long-time Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for children in foster care. Samaura was recently appointed to the Montgomery County Board of Social Services. In this role, she is responsible for advising the County Executive, Council, State Department of Human Services and Governor's office on issues and policies pertaining to children, adults and families.

Betsy Tolentino
Executive Director, Pre-Adjudication Services and Reform
Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

Betsy Fox Tolentino serves as the Executive Director of Pre-Adjudication Services & Reform for the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. A graduate of Southern Oregon University and Widener University School of Law, Tolentino's career has focused extensively on criminal and juvenile justice advocacy, and policy development. Tolentino's experience includes representing and advocating for criminal defendants and children in Maryland's foster care and juvenile justice systems before trial courts, the Maryland General Assembly, and other executives, stakeholders and public policymakers. In her current role, Betsy manages the Department of Juvenile Services' Office of Pre-Adjudication Services and Reform which contains the statewide intake, community detention, and reform and equity operations of six Department of Juvenile Services regions and 33 field offices across Maryland. Prior to her current role, Betsy was the Director of Legislation and Policy where she managed the Department's intergovernmental relations, and assisted program staff in developing and monitoring programs to meet policy objectives consistent with Maryland law and national best practices.