



Cate Blackford
Director of Public Policy

Cate (she/her) leads the development of MPA's policy agenda and legislative strategy, in close collaboration with members and allies, to advance our mission and meet the moment.

Cate has spent her career working to connect the people most excluded from state and local decision making to the process and supporting them in shaping solutions. She has worked on housing, hunger, consumer protections, fiscal policy, establishing universal benefits like retirement and paid leave, and many other issues.

She holds a BA from UMaine and Masters in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School, which she's using to ensure other people don't need advanced degrees to feel like they belong in developing policy solutions. She lives in Isleboro with her husband and two children.



Amy Jo Hutchison
Campaign Director, WV State Moms Force,
Workplace Justice, Early Learning

Amy Jo Hutchison is a born and raised West Virginian. She began organizing in poor and marginalized communities across the state in 2017, using her lived experience of poverty to connect with people who share the same experience. In February 2020, Amy Jo spoke to the United States House Committee on Oversight and Reform regarding the poverty level in Washington D.C. Her testimony went viral and has provided her the opportunity to discuss poverty on a much broader stage. In October of 2021, she appeared in episode 3 of "The Problem with Jon Stewart," "The Economy," in which she discussed the issues affecting the working poor, and she returned to the show later in the season for a "pass the mic" conversation. More recently, Amy Jo was named the 2024 recipient of the 2024 T. Berry Brazelton Friend of Children Award by the board of directors for the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA).



Tamara Lunan

Director, Care Economy Project

Tami Lunan is a seasoned Political Strategist with expertise in public policy, movement building, and advocacy for racial and LGBTQ+ justice. She has contributed to a range of legislative and electoral campaigns at the local, state, and federal levels, and has organized with multiple high-profile candidates and issue-based initiatives.

Currently, Tami serves as the Caring Economy Organizing Director at the Ohio Organizing Collaborative, where she leads the CEO (Caring Economy Organizing) Project—a statewide coalition focused on improving access, equity, and standards in Ohio's child care system. With a strong background in field organizing, Tami has held leadership roles with several prominent advocacy organizations, including the National Audubon Society and Equality Ohio. She is also a founding organizer behind one of Ohio's earliest initiatives centering queer women of color, and continues to support community-based efforts through board service and volunteer work.



Ashley Shelton

Founder, President and CEO

Ashley K. Shelton is the Founder, President, and CEO of the Power Coalition, a statewide 501c3 table in Louisiana. The Power Coalition uses a broad-based strategy that combines community organizing, issue advocacy, and civic action all while increasing the capacity of community organizations throughout the state to sustain and hold the work.

Our integrated voter engagement approach has changed policy at the municipal and state level as well as move infrequent voters of color to vote at the same levels as chronic voters in the communities where we run a full get out to vote program.

She also was the former Vice President of Programs at the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation (LDRF), now the Foundation for Louisiana. In her role at the Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, Ms. Shelton managed a system of integrated, value-added programs in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In her role at LDRF, she designed, initiated and coordinated a comprehensive policy strategy, which led to a systemic, multi-pronged approach to equitable policy development on a local, state and national level. She utilized a participatory model that engaged local, state, and national partnerships to develop and nurture civic engagement throughout the state.