**Speaker Biographies**

**Keynote Speaker**

**Kevonne Small, Attorney Advisor**

**U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division**

Dr. Kevonne Small is an attorney advisor in the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section (FCS) in DOJ’s Civil Rights Division. In this role she investigates allegations of Title VI violations and ensures federal agencies consistently and effectively enforce statutes and related Executive Orders that prohibit discrimination in programs that receive Federal financial assistance. Prior to joining FCS, she was a trial attorney in the Division’s Criminal Section prosecuting alleged civil rights offenses involving official misconduct, hate crimes, and human trafficking. Prior to joining DOJ, she worked at Washington, DC area think tank organizations and taught criminal justice at California State University in San Bernardino, CA.

**Featured Speaker**

**Professor Muneer Ahmad, Clinical Professor of Law and Supervising Attorney**

**Yale Law School, Worker & Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic**

Muneer Ahmad is a Clinical Professor of Law and Supervising Attorney at Yale Law School, where he co-teaches in the Transnational Development Clinic and the Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic (WIRAC). In WIRAC, he and his students represent individuals, groups and organizations in both litigation and non-litigation matters related to immigration, immigrants’ rights, and labor, and intersections among them. In the Transnational Development Clinic, he and his students work on projects designed to identify productive sites for intervention for U.S.-based lawyers in global poverty work. His scholarship examines the intersections of immigration, race, and citizenship in both legal theory and legal practice.

**Federal Agencies and Language Access**

**Ellen Gallagher** (DHS-CRCL), Senior Policy Advisor, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

For over twenty years, Ellen Gallagher has worked as an attorney in the United States Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, with a focus on immigration law and policy. She entered on duty in 1995 in New York City, representing the government in deportation and removal proceedings, and subsequently accepted assignments in San Antonio, Texas and Washington, D.C. After serving for ten years as Special Counsel in the Citizenship and Immigration Services Office of the Chief Counsel, Ms. Gallagher transferred in July of 2012, to the Department of Homeland Security Office of the CIS Ombudsman, and, in December of 2013, moved to the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, where she remains. She works remotely from Massachusetts. Ms. Gallagher graduated from Harvard College and Northeastern School of Law.

**Stephen Miliano** (USDA-FNS), Civil Rights Director, U.S. Department of Agriculture- Food and Nutrition Service, Northeastern Regional Office

Mr. Steve Miliano is the Civil Rights Director assigned to the Food and Nutrition Service’s (FNS) Northeast Regional Office (NERO) in Boston, MA. In this position, he provides Civil Rights oversight, guidance, and assistance for all Federally Assisted (FA) programs managed by FNS at the Regional, State, and local agency levels.  He is also responsible for developing and conducting Civil Rights training and conducting Civil Rights compliance reviews of FA programs, independently, or in conjunction with NERO’s program Management Evaluation teams.

**Stephen Richardson** (SSA), Deputy Regional Communications Director, Social Security Administration

Stephen Richardson is a Deputy Regional Communications Director for the Social Security Administration (SSA) in New England. He began his career with SSA in 1982 as a claims representative in the Roxbury, Massachusetts District Office and since that time, has worked in several different management and staff positions in the Boston area. In 2005, Richardson served as a Capitol Hill Fellow and worked as a Professional Budget Analyst for the Senate Budget Committee in Washington D. C. As a Public Affairs Specialist, Richardson is responsible for coordinating the Social Security Administration’s public affairs/public information activities in the six New England states. He has been particularly active in the past 14 years spearheading the agency’s efforts to educate the American public about Social Security. A native New Englander, Richardson received a Bachelor’s in Political Science from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1984 and a Master’s degree in Public Affairs from Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts in 1999.

**Eric Olick** (DOEd-OCR), Senior Civil Rights Attorney, U.S. Department of Education- Office of Civil Rights

Eric D. Olick began his legal career in 1984 at the New Jersey Department of the Public Advocate’s Center for Public Dispute Resolution, mediating public interest conflicts and conducting trainings in meditation and conflict resolution. In 1986 he moved to Boston and became the Directing Attorney for the International Institute of Boston, a non-profit organization representing immigrants and refugees in human rights and political asylum cases.  In 1988, he went to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR).  In 1994, he left OCR and went to work for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as an Administrative Judge.  He returned to OCR in 1995 and has remained there as a Senior Civil Rights Attorney.  Mr. Olick has also studied human rights and peace education at the University for Peace in Costa Rica, taught graduate courses in ESL teaching methodology at the University of Massachusetts, and served as a Commissioner on the Cambridge Human Rights Commission. Eric obtained a B.A. degree from Tufts University in 1980, a J.D. from Emory University School of Law in 1983, and an M.A in teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Massachusetts in 1992.

**Anne-Sophie Whitaker**, (HHS-OCR), Supervisory Equal Opportunity Specialist, US Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights

Anne-Sophie Whitaker joined the Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights in 2009 as an Equal Opportunity Specialist in Boston.  In 2015, she became a Supervisory Equal Opportunity Specialist.  She investigates allegations of violations of Civil Rights Laws, including Title VI, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the ADA, and the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules.  Prior to joining OCR, Anne-Sophie interned at Greater Boston Legal Services’ Health and Disability Unit and the US Attorney’s Office for the District of Massachusetts in the Criminal Division.  Anne-Sophie holds a B.A. in Public Policy with a minor in Education from Hamilton College, and a J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law.

**Access Needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clients**

**Caitlin Parton**, Staff Attorney, Disability Law Center

Caitlin joined DLC as a staff attorney in September 2014. Her advocacy work with DLC includes housing, special education, employment, and access to health care. She has also conducted trainings on the transition from high school to adult services, and best practices for serving clients who are deaf and hard of hearing. Caitlin is deaf and wears a cochlear implant. Caitlin has been an advocate for the deaf and hard of hearing from a young age, testifying before the U.S. Senate, Congress, and FDA in support of funding for research on cochlear implants. She has spoken across the country and internationally on access issues for the deaf and hard of hearing. Caitlin received her law degree from the City University of New York School of Law and her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Chicago. During law school, she interned with the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Special Litigation Section; New York Lawyers for the Public Interest; and Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, among others. While she uses spoken language, Caitlin can also use ASL to communicate based on client preference.

**Language, Culture and Race**

**Gwendolyn Hampton VanSant**, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Multicultural BRIDGE

Gwendolyn Hampton-VanSant is CEO and founding Director of Multicultural BRIDGE, a grassroots organization dedicated to promoting cultural competence and integration of diverse groups in Western Massachusetts. She is a diversity leader and trainer, bilingual certified interpreter, and community activist/organizer, designs curriculum for workplace language classes as well as highly customizable cultural competency, literacy & proficiency training. She provides multicultural education curriculum for faculty, students, and parents of all ages and professional, educational and socioeconomic backgrounds rooted in cultural competence, diversity leadership and positive psychology. Designing diverse speaker series, civil rights conferences, community forums and facilitating tough systemic conversations, Gwendolyn has established herself as an expert in diversity leadership and cultural competence. In 2014/15, Gwendolyn designed and hosted a Civil Rights Conference featuring US Attorney Carmen Ortiz; designed employee and supervisor training corporation wide in cultural proficiency and microinequities at King Arthur Flour; She published and authored an anthology, *Berkshire Mosaic: A Multicultural BRIDGE Living History Project;* and finally in March 2015, Multicultural BRIDGE was cited in criminal psychology/justice textbook *Understanding Hate Crimes* (Carolyn Petrosino, Routledge) as a best community-based practice.

**Jeffrey Lowenstein,** BRIDGE facilitator

Jeff recently graduated from Brandeis University with double majors in Politics and Hispanic Studies. He has extensive experience studying other cultures and has taken classes dealing with language rights, multiculturalism, and diversity, during which he facilitated discussions on these issues. He has also worked with immigrant populations as an assistant at Volunteers In Medicine and has worked as a Spanish language instructor. He has spent time living in Ecuador and Uruguay and has personal experience dealing with language barriers.

**Advocating for English Language Learners in Education:**

**Building Multilingual Coalitions**

**Alina Nir**, Americorps Attorney, Community Legal Aid

Alina Kantor Nir is serving as an AmeriCorps Attorney, working to start up an Education Law practice at Community legal Aid through the Massachusetts Legal Assistance for Self-Sufficiency Program. She is currently assessing the needs of the Worcester community in the area of education law and advocating for clients about their rights and their children’s rights under state and federal laws. Alina has previously worked for Choate, Hall & Stewart (Boston, MA) and Rhode Island Legal Services (Providence, RI). She has also worked as a special education advocate and is a mother of three boys, one of whom has autism. She is licensed to practice law in Massachusetts. She earned a J.D. from Duke University School of Law and a B.A. in English and History from Wellesley College.

**Tere Ramos**, Equal Justice Works Attorney, Disability Law Center

Tere Ramos is an Attorney and Equal Justice Works Fellow at the Disability Law Center. Her work focuses on access to special education for Hispanic children in Massachusetts, especially in Lawrence, with a focus on improving their education outcomes. She provides direct legal representation and Spanish language education rights training to families. Tere began her career as a community organizer and special education advocate, and was Executive Director of Special Education Advocates. Realizing the lack of Latino lawyers focusing on education rights, Tere earned her J.D. from Boston College Law School. A graduate of Wellesley College and Georgetown University, Tere was elected to the Wellesley School Committee, 2012-2015, and is currently the Co-Chair of the Department of Education’s Special Education Advisory Committee. She is a mother of two girls, one with autism.

**Phyllis Barajas**, Chief Executive Officer, Conexión

Phyllis Barajas is the Chief Executive Officer of Conexión, a ten month executive mentoring and leadership experience for mid-career Hispanic & Latino professionals. The program’s focus is to develop leaders who understand the implication of the nexus between the rising Hispanic & Latino demographic, socioeconomic factors, and the sustainability of the U.S. economy. She is a lifelong Latina activist and social entrepreneur committed to developing and advancing Latino leadership. She served as the first Latina assistant dean for human resources at Harvard Kennedy School of Government. She is a former deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Education offices of elementary, secondary, and bilingual education appointed by President Clinton. She serves on numerous non-profit boards and is a trustee of Eastern Bank. Phyllis is the daughter of Mexican immigrants.

**AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS**

**Language Access Initiatives in the Massachusetts Trial Court**

**Honorable Roberto Ronquillo, Jr.**, Chief Justice of the Boston Municipal Court Department, Massachusetts Trial Court

The Honorable Roberto Ronquillo, Jr. is the Chief Justice of the Boston Municipal Court Department (BMCD). He is responsible for the judicial administration and oversight of 32 trial court judges and more than 500 employees throughout the 8 courts within Suffolk County. Chief Ronquillo was appointed to the bench in 2001 as an Associate Justice. In 2007, he was appointed First Justice of the South Boston Division and then, in 2008, he was appointed Frist Justice of the East Boston Division. He was appointed as Chief Justice of the Boston Municipal Court Department in 2014.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Chief Ronquillo was an Assistant District Attorney. For thirteen years, he was in private practice, focusing on criminal defense and personal injury law. A graduate of New England Law|Boston and the University of Texas at El Paso, he is an Adjunct Faculty Member of New England Law|Boston.

**Maria Fournier, Esq**, Director of Support Services, Office of Court Management, Massachusetts Trial Court

Maria Fournier is the Director of Support Services in the Office of Court Management of the Massachusetts Trial Court. She oversees the Office of Court Interpreter Services, Court Service Centers, Law Libraries, Transcription Services, Records Retention, and Judicial Response. Prior to her current position, she worked as an Assistant Clerk Magistrate for the Trial Court and Legal Manager for the MA Department of Children and Families. She has been an adjunct professor at the Massachusetts school of Law for 16 years where she teaches Motions and Litigation Practice, Research and Writing, and Civil Procedure Review. Maria graduated from Boston University and the Massachusetts School of Law.

**Edgar Moros, PhD**, Court Translation Specialist, Office of Court Interpreter Services, Massachusetts Trial Court

Edgar Moros has been an active member of the American Translators Association since 1997. He is currently the Court Translation Specialist at the Massachusetts Trial Court. He is also the coordinator of the online translation certificate program at Adelphi University in New York, where he teaches three translation courses. He worked as a professor of Translation Studies at the Universidad de Los Andes in Mérida Venezuela from 1999 to 2013 and was the Director of the MS in Teaching/Learning Foreign Languages, and coordinator of the University’s translation and interpreting service. He has also worked as a conference interpreter for several multinational corporations, the Venezuelan Ministry of Interior, and the Canadian and British Embassies in Caracas, Venezuela for dignitaries such as Nobel Peace Prize Nominee Izzeldin Abuelaish.  Dr. Moros has worked as an in-house translator at AT&T Business Translations in North Carolina and International Language Engineering Corporation in Colorado, and as a freelance translator since 1994. He holds a BS and MA in Translation from Kent State University in Ohio and a PhD in Translation Studies from SUNY Binghamton, New York. He has translated over 200 technical manuals, El Apando, a novel by Mexican writer José Revueltas, and is the author of Deconstructing Traditional Notions in Translation Studies, published in 2011.

**Technology Based Public Engagement Strategies:**

**Tech Tools for Mapping LEP Community Engagement**

**John Lozada**, Manager of Federal Programs, Office of Diversity and Civil Rights, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

As an attorney and manager, John Lozada has contributed to the fields of education, discrimination investigations, and transportation in both the public and private sectors. At MassDOT, John's efforts focus on providing leadership to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In this work, he co-chairs a large team of subject matter experts to identify and remove physical and other barriers that limit the access of individuals with disabilities and minorities to the programs, services, and activities across MassDOT.

**Gregory Sobczynski**, Title VI Specialist, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Greg has a degree in law with a concentration in administrative and civil rights related law, which he earned while serving as an intern with ODCR during his studies. Greg started his professional career with ODCR as the Title VI Specialist, taking on a lead role in implementing MassDOT's Title VI Programs.  In this work, he collaborates with the federal funding agencies that oversee MassDOT's compliance with applicable civil rights laws, among which Title VI is a critical area of focus. These partners are constantly looking for MassDOT to comply with the law, but also to innovate, and Greg is putting significant time into developing model methods for incorporating Title VI into the culture and work ethic of the agency.

**Paul Chenard**,Transportation Planner, Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC)

Paul Chenard joined OCPC in May 2013, and assist in transportation planning studies and data collection. Paul has a work background in public transportation, having previously worked at the SFMTA, NYMTA, and HARTransit. He holds a Master of Urban Planning from New York University and a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies and Planning from San Francisco State University.

 **Jimmy Pereira**, Community/Transportation Planner, Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC)

A Class of 2013 graduate of Westfield State University, Mr. Pereira holds a Bachelor's Degree in Geography and Regional Planning with a Minor in Ethnic and Gender Studies. He previously worked as Massbike's Springfield Healthy Design Coordinator, focusing on bicycle and pedestrian improvements, public outreach, and raising awareness to bicycling as reliable transportation. He assists in community and transportation planning studies and data collection.

**Cultural Competency and Civic Participation:**

**Somerville Language Access to Better Engage its Immigrant Communities**

**Irma Flores**, City of Somerville Community Engagement Specialist, Spanish Language Liaison

Irma Flores is the Spanish Language Liaison in the City of Somerville’s SomerVIVA program. She is a former Somerville High School Welcome Center Family and Community Outreach Coordinator. In her current role at SomerVIVA, she is responsible for developing family engagement systems and activities that create strong partnerships that support teaching, learning and student achievement.  With a background in community organizing, she worked as a Parent Organizer for EBECC, teaching mothers about the U.S. school system as compared to Latin American education, their responsibilities and rights as parents, including language access, and how important it is to advocate for their children so that they would not be overlooked or miss opportunities. Irma is a native of El Salvador.

**Adriana Fernandes**, City of Somerville Community Engagement Specialist, Portuguese Language Liaison

Adriana Fernandes is the Portuguese Language Liaison in the City of Somerville’s SomerVIVA program. She is a former Somerville Public Schools parent liaison, with a background in community outreach and education.  Adriana has experience in teaching, counseling individuals and groups, managing, implementing educational curricula, promoting cultural events, advising and recruiting international students in Latin America, teaching Portuguese and English as a second language. Currently, Adriana has been facilitating multilingual communication and building a critical program, SomerVIVA, involving local leadership, dialogue and communications to promote immigrant welcoming and integration at the city of Somerville. Adriana is a native of Brazil.

**Jhenny Saint-Surin**, City of Somerville Community Engagement Specialist, Haitian Creole Language Liaison

Jhenny Saint-Surin is the Haitian Creole Language Liaison in the City of Somerville’s SomerVIVA program. She graduated from the University of Florida with a major in Political Science and a minor in Anthropology. She pursued a master’s degree in sustainable development with a concentration in management from the School for International Studies. During her academic career she took field courses in Morocco and Bangladesh.  Living and studying in various countries and being an immigrant in the U.S. influenced her interest in the issues that immigrants face. Jhenny hopes that the Haitian community will be informed and empowered through her engagement efforts to play an active role in their city. Jhenny is a native of Haiti.

**Health Equity and Language Justice**

**Michael Soo Hoo**, Office of Racial Equity and Health Improvement, Boston Public Health Commission

Michael is the Senior Policy Analyst in the Office of Racial Equity and Health Improvement at the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC).  He has worked at BPHC since 2004; his work has included Immigrant & Refugee health policy, LGBTQ cultural competency, and staffing the internal BPHC Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, and Language Justice working group. He graduated from Oberlin College with a B.A. in Sociology and the University of California, Los Angeles with a M.A. in American Ethnic Studies.

**Lisa Morris**, Director of Cross Cultural Initiatives for UMass Medical Center

Lisa Morris is currently working as the Director of Cross Cultural Initiatives for the MassAHEC Network at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.  One of her key tasks is the coordination of the delivery of a Medical Interpreter Training Program in collaboration with the Executive Office of Health & Human Services. She began her training career in 1991 at Bristol Community College as a program coordinator and instructor.  Since that time she has become an adjunct faculty member at Cape Cod Community College and Cambridge College.  Ms. Morris serves as treasurer to the National Council on Interpreting in Healthcare and is an active member of the International Medical Interpreters Association.  Ms. Morris has presented on the topic of medical interpreting and healthcare access on various occasions in the United States and in Canada.  She holds a B.A. in Romance Languages from Boston College, and an M.S. in Training and Development from Lesley College.

**Melissa L. Anderson**, Pd.D., Psychologist and Clinical Researcher, UMass Medical School Department of Psychiatry

Melissa L. Anderson, Ph.D. is a psychologist and clinical researcher in the UMass Medical School Department of Psychiatry, studying an underdeveloped but critical topic area – the development and evaluation of evidence-based psychotherapies for Deaf clients. Melissa is making a critical first step toward reducing Deaf people’s behavioral health disparities by developing and evaluating Deaf-accessible interventions for trauma and addiction. At UMass, Melissa provides individual therapy to Deaf clients recovering from trauma and addiction and conducts research on best approaches for working with Deaf clients. She is the recent recipient of a Clinical Research Scholar Award (K12) administered by the UMass Center for Clinical & Translational Science, with which she and a team of Deaf and hearing clinicians and community members are currently developing a digital American Sign Language therapy manual for treating trauma and addiction.