



2025 Annual Conference Participant Bios

AJ King, MPH, Next-Level Consulting, Inc.

AJ King (he/him/his) is the Director of Next-Level Consulting, Inc., an independent consulting firm specializing in nonprofit capacity building and human resources services. AJ has over 25 years of experience in the field of public health and nonprofit management. His work focuses on developing and delivering trainings and workshops; developing and implementing evaluation plans and community-based assessments; grant-proposal writing, research and report writing, and planning processes. A strong advocate for collaborative approaches, AJ has facilitated such processes for government agencies, universities, coalition groups and community-based organizations. He has written successful grant proposals at the federal, state, and local level, securing millions of dollars from both government and private funders. As a seasoned trainer, AJ has developed numerous curricula and engaged a variety of audiences ranging from public health officials to community level providers. AJ has served in leadership roles on the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, HIV Prevention Planning Council, and currently serves as a Senior Trainer for The Grantsmanship Center and an Associate of Community Works Consulting, Inc. and the Aspire Group.

Arburtha Franklin, Public Policy Committee Co-Chair, Los Angeles County Commission on HIV

Arburtha Franklin (she/her) serves as Co-Chair of the Public Policy Committee for the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV. In this role, she helps guide the Commission's policy agenda to advance equitable, community-informed approaches to HIV prevention, care, and treatment. Arburtha is also the House Coordinator at The TransLatin@ Coalition, where she supports the housing stability and wellbeing of transgender and gender-expansive individuals through compassionate, hands-on leadership and advocacy.

Bamby Salcedo, President & CEO, Translatin@ Coalition

Bamby Salcedo (she/her/ella) is a trailblazing Trans Latina immigrant, activist and visionary who has dedicated her life to uplifting transgender, gender-expansive and intersex communities across the United States and beyond. As President & CEO of the TransLatin@ Coalition (founded in 2009), she leads an organization that builds pathways to dignity, safety and opportunities for trans Latinas and other historically marginalized groups. With a master's degree in Mexican & Latin@ Studies earned at California State University, Los Angeles, Salcedo



combines lived experience, academic insight and fierce advocacy. Her story of survival—from immigration, incarceration, substance-use recovery, and systemic marginalization—to leadership and transformation is a powerful example of resilience. Whether speaking to national audiences, shaping public-policy forums, or building community infrastructures like the Center for Violence Prevention & Transgender Wellness in Los Angeles, Bamby’s work is rooted in the belief that every person deserves dignity, equity, and a seat at the table.

Bee Curiel, MSW, Manager of Policy & Training Innovations, TransLatin@ Coalition

Bee Curiel (they/them/elle) is a queer & trans advocate and educator who brings personal lived experience and professional expertise to their work. At The TransLatin@ Coalition, Bee serves in a coordinating role and leads efforts in housing advocacy, community outreach, and capacity building with transgender and gender-expansive Latinx communities. Bee holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) and has engaged in research on housing access and resource equity in Los Angeles County.

Cheryl Barrit, MPIA, Former Executive Director, Los Angeles County Commission on HIV

Cheryl Barrit (she/her) recently concluded an extraordinary 28-year career in public service, including nine years as Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV. Before joining Los Angeles County, Cheryl spent 15 years in management roles with the City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, leading policy, planning, prevention, and clinical programs. She also served as a Public Health Advisor and Presidential Management Fellow at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She holds a BA in Law and Society from UC Santa Barbara and a Master’s in Public and International Affairs from the University of Pittsburgh.

Danielle M. Campbell, PhD, MPH, Co-Chair, Los Angeles County Commission on HIV

Danielle M. Campbell (she/her) serves as the Co-Chair of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, bringing a deep commitment to health equity, lived community insight, and rigorous research to our collective mission. A native of South Los Angeles, she earned her MPH and recently completed her PhD in Public Health and Human Longevity Science at University of California, San Diego. Danielle has centered her work on how structural systems of oppression shape HIV-related outcomes, particularly among women, gender-diverse people, and racial/ethnic minority communities. She has held leadership roles in the American Public Health Association (APHA) HIV/AIDS Section, serves on key U.S. federal guideline panels, and has driven community-engaged research that advances equity in prevention, care, and cure spaces.



Darryn Harris, Chief Government Affairs & Community Relations Officer, St. John's Community Health Center

Darryn Harris (he/him/his) serves as Chief Government Affairs & Community Relations Officer at St. John's Community Health, where he leads strategic advocacy, public-policy engagement, and community outreach to drive health equity and access across Los Angeles County. With a foundation in both grassroots organizing and systems-level policy work, Darryn has taken a strong stand on issues such as maternal and child health, workforce stability, and the intersections of care systems in underserved communities. In his current role, he drives partnerships between St. John's and local, state, and national stakeholders—making sure that the voices of communities most affected by health disparities are at the table while shaping programs and funding streams to meet real-world needs.

Leon Maultsby, DBH, MHA, Executive Director, In the Meantime Men's Group

Leon Maultsby (he/him/his) serves as Executive Director of In the Meantime Men's Group, a Los Angeles-based organization dedicated to fostering healing, empowerment, cultural celebration, and wellness among Black gay, same-gender-loving, and bisexual men. In his leadership role, Leon guides strategy, program development, and community engagement, aligning with the organization's mission to provide safe spaces and transformative services. With advanced credentials in public health and health administration, Leon brings both scholarly rigor and lived-community insight to his work. He has broad experience in health equity, wellness advocacy, and community-based leadership in the Greater Los Angeles area. Leon also serves on the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV and is the Black Caucus Co-Chair.

Marisa Ramos, PhD, Chief, State Office of AIDS, California Department of Public Health

Dr. Marisa Ramos (she/her) serves as Chief of the Office of AIDS within the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), where she leads statewide efforts to end the HIV epidemic through prevention, care, policy, and community-engaged strategies. Her leadership includes guiding programmatic planning, fostering partnerships across jurisdictions and sectors, and promoting data-driven, equity-centered approaches to HIV and AIDS services in California. With more than a decade at CDPH before her appointment as Chief in 2020, Dr. Ramos brings both institutional knowledge and a commitment to responsive public health leadership. She has played a central role in modernizing systems and advancing programs focused on historically underserved communities.



Michael Barajas, Senior Community Liaison, Gilead Sciences

Michael Barajas (he/him/his) is a Senior Community Liaison at Gilead Sciences, where he works at the intersection of public health, community engagement, and health equity. Grounded in a deep commitment to social justice, Michael strives to provide communities with the tools and knowledge needed to overcome major health disparities. He believes that access to health care is a fundamental right and remains steadfast in his commitment to empowering communities through capacity-building efforts, research, education, and support services. Michael has a demonstrated track record of executing strategic initiatives that advance health outcomes for marginalized populations. He brings a comprehensive understanding of epidemiological data, federal and state initiatives, and funding landscapes, as well as hands-on experience developing clinical workflows and protocols designed to reduce health inequities. With an unwavering dedication to partnership, advocacy, and community-driven solutions, Michael continues to champion efforts that strengthen systems of care and expand access for those most impacted.

Gerald Garth, MBA, Executive Director, AMAAD Institute

Gerald Garth (he/him/his) serves as Executive Director of AMAAD Institute, a South Los Angeles-based organization dedicated to advancing health equity and wellbeing among Black, Latinx, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized communities. Under Gerald's leadership, AMAAD has expanded from its roots in addiction recovery to a holistic provider of services that include HIV prevention and care, behavioral and mental health support, housing and re-entry programs, and public policy advocacy. With an MBA and a career marked by shifts—from accounting to communications to frontline public health—Gerald brings both strategic acumen and lived-community insight to his role. His journey includes launching the first direct-service testing programming at Black AIDS Institute, and subsequently growing AMAAD's staffing and reach significantly. Gerald is a former member of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV and former Black Caucus Co-Chair. Gerald is known for his inclusive, empowered leadership style: he emphasizes the interconnected nature of health, housing, mental wellness, and community belonging. He frequently says, *"We are the experts of our own experience. None of us have to do everything, if all of us do something."*

Joaquin Gutierrez, Commissioner, Los Angeles County Commission on HIV

Joaquin Guitierrez (he/him/his) is a seasoned public-health professional with more than 15 years of experience in HIV prevention and outreach across Los Angeles County and beyond. He has worked in both frontline service delivery and program coordination roles, giving him a grounded understanding of how policy and practice intersect in real-world settings. Most recently, Joaquin served at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), where he contributed to HIV-related initiatives. His time at CHLA helped sharpen his expertise in integrated care models and the unique needs of



youth and families affected by HIV. Prior to that, Joaquin held positions such as HIV Prevention Specialist at AltaMed Health Services, where he led community outreach and education efforts. Joaquin is known for his inclusive, community-centered approach. He places a high priority on engaging with communities most impacted by HIV—listening first, partnering second—and then translating those insights into both program and policy action. His lived-community insight, combined with years of practice in policy-adjacent spaces, makes him a strong contributor to the Commission’s mission of equity-driven HIV prevention and care.

Joseph Green, Co-Chair, Los Angeles County Commission on HIV

Joseph Green (he/him/his) serves as Co-Chair of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, where he guides strategic planning, governance, and community-led oversight of HIV prevention, care, and policy in Los Angeles County. In his role, he brings lived experience, leadership and a steady hand in charting pathways toward health equity and the end of the HIV epidemic. Joe has been a commissioner with the body for more than a decade, offering a continuity of perspective and commitment that helps anchor the Commission’s work amidst shifting landscapes. He has played a visible role in convening meetings, advancing the Commission’s operational structures (including committee governance and bylaws), and ensuring that community voice remains central in decision-making. Joe also serves on the City of West Hollywood’s Disabilities Advisory Board and as Treasurer on the Board of Trustees for Hollywood United Methodist Church.

Judith S. Currier, MD, Professor of Medicine, Executive Vice Chair for Research, Department of Medicine, Sue and Michael Steinberg Chair in Global AIDS Research, Chair, AIDS Clinical Trials Group

Dr. Judith S. Currier (she/her) is Professor of Medicine and Executive Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She also holds the Sue and Michael Steinberg Chair in Global AIDS Research and serves as Chair of the AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG), the world’s largest and longest-running HIV clinical trials network. A leader in HIV medicine, Dr. Currier’s research focuses on optimizing antiretroviral therapy, understanding long-term complications of HIV and its treatment, and improving care outcomes for women and people living with HIV in resource-limited settings. As Principal Investigator of the UCLA AIDS Prevention and Treatment Clinical Trials Unit, she has led numerous studies advancing HIV treatment and prevention globally.

Katja Nelson, MPP, Local Affairs Specialist, Government Affairs Division, APLA Health

Katja Nelson (she/her) is the Local Affairs Specialist at APLA Health, a federal qualified health center in Los Angeles, California where she engages in policy and advocacy work at all levels of government. Her work addresses health care access and affordability, health equity and



wellbeing, and housing and homelessness issues, particularly for the LGBTQ+ and other underserved communities, and people living with and affected by HIV. Katja sits on the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV and through APLA Health serves in a policy advisory role for the California HIV/AIDS Research Center (CHPRC).

Kevin Pizarro, Outreach Coordinator, UCLA Health CARE Center

Kevin Pizarro (he/him/they/them) is the Outreach Coordinator at the UCLA Center for Clinical AIDS Research and Education (CARE Center), where he leads community engagement, recruitment, and retention efforts for HIV prevention and treatment studies. Kevin works closely with research teams, clinicians, and community partners to ensure that study outreach reflects the voices and needs of Los Angeles's diverse LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities. He also supports the CARE Center's Community Advisory Boards, fostering collaboration between researchers and community members to guide ethical and inclusive research. Beyond the clinic, Kevin brings research to life through authentic connection and transforming complex science into accessible conversations that empower, educate, and inspire community participation.

Mario J. Pérez, MPH, Director, Division of HIV and STD Programs (DHSP), Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Mario J. Pérez (he/him/his) serves as the Director of the Division of HIV and STD Programs (DHSP) at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. In this role he oversees the strategic planning, allocation, and management of substantial federal, state and local resources to support a comprehensive HIV and sexually transmitted disease service delivery system throughout Los Angeles County. Beyond the operations of DHSP, Mario has been a visible leader at local, state and national levels of the HIV field — engaging in policy, advocacy and systems-change initiatives. He continues to advance evidence-driven prevention and care strategies in one of the most diverse and populous HIV jurisdictions in the United States, placing emphasis on equity, responsiveness and impact. Mario is also a member of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV.

Miguel Alvarez, Operations Committee Co-Chair, Los Angeles County Commission on HIV

Miguel Alvarez (he/him/his) serves as Co-Chair of the Operations Committee for the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, where he helps guide the body's internal governance, membership processes, and operational efficiency. A strong prevention advocate, Miguel is deeply committed to advancing equitable access to HIV prevention, care, and treatment services across Los Angeles County. Grounded in lived experience and community leadership, Miguel works to ensure that prevention remains at the forefront of the County's HIV response and that the voices of those



most impacted are centered in every decision. His leadership reflects compassion, collaboration, and an unwavering belief in the power of community-driven strategies to end the HIV epidemic.

Rhodri Dierst-Davies, PhD, MPH, Director, CA HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP)

Dr. Rhodri Dierst-Davies (he/him/his) serves as Director and Health Equity Lead of the California HIV/AIDS Research Program (CHRP) within the University of California Office of the President. He holds a PhD in Public Health (Community Health Sciences) and an MPH in Epidemiology from the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. Prior to joining CHRP in 2022, Dr. Dierst-Davies worked as an epidemiologist with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Division of HIV & STD Programs and later in consulting roles for major agencies. In his current role, he leads CHRP's strategic investment in community-centered, equity-driven HIV research across California — advancing project funding, policy-linkage, and capacity-building for under-represented communities in the HIV response.

Robert Gamboa, MPP, Associate Director of Public Policy, Los Angeles LGBT Center

Robert Gamboa (he/him) is the Associate Director of Public Policy for the Los Angeles LGBT Center, where he leads legislative, budgetary, and administrative advocacy to advance equity and improve outcomes for LGBTQ+ communities across Los Angeles County, the State of California, and federally. His portfolio spans gender equity, immigration, education, homelessness, civil rights, health equity, and support for transgender, LGBTQ youth, and older adults. Robert has helped secure more than \$15 billion in state, county, and local funding to sustain and expand programs serving LGBTQ+ women's health, HIV, immigrant, youth, older adult, and transgender communities. He also serves on the California LGBTQ Caucus Advisory Board, working with state leaders to shape policy priorities. Previously, Robert served eleven years on the City of West Hollywood's Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board, including four terms as Chair. He holds a BBA from the University of Texas at Austin and an Masters of Public Policy from UCLA Luskin, where has taught graduate students and guest lectures.

Shellye Jones, MSW, LCSW, Clinical Supervisor, Drew CARES

Shellye Jones (she/her) serves as Clinical Supervisor for the Drew CARES program at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, where she oversees and supports trauma-informed engagement, retention, and wrap-around care strategies for people living with HIV in Los Angeles. Her work focuses on dismantling barriers to care—including stigma and social determinants of health—and ensuring that clients receive individualized, culturally responsive services designed to meet them where they are. Through this leadership role, Shellye brings together clinical insight, community-centered practices, and operational oversight to advance HIV care equity across the region.



Thelma Garcia, Director of HIV Services, East Los Angeles Women's Center

Thelma Garcia (she/her) serves as Director of HIV Services at the East Los Angeles Women's Center (ELAWC), where she leads outreach, prevention and care programming for women living with or at risk for HIV in Los Angeles County. With more than two decades of experience working with Latine immigrant women and survivors of violence, Thelma began her HIV-service work as a health educator among newly arrived Central American women in the Westlake and East Los Angeles neighborhoods. She has made equity and community voice central to her work—ensuring that prevention and care services are trauma-informed, culturally responsive and accessible to women who face multiple barriers including immigration status, intimate partner violence, and stigma.

William D. King, JD, MD, AAHIVS, W. King Health Care Group

Dr. William D. King (he/him/his) is the founder and principal physician of W King Health Care Group in Los Angeles, where he provides comprehensive, culturally responsive primary care with a strong focus on HIV and hepatitis C. A Los Angeles native, Dr. King holds a Bachelor's degree in Cellular and Molecular Biology from California State University, Northridge, and earned both his MD and JD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He completed his internal medicine residency at Harvard Medical School's Cambridge Hospital, where he served as Chief Resident, followed by fellowships in HIV clinical research and health disparities at UCLA. Board-certified in Internal Medicine and credentialed as an HIV Specialist by the American Academy of HIV Medicine, Dr. King has published peer-reviewed research, delivered international lectures in South Africa, Uganda, and Ghana, and continues to be a prominent voice in addressing racial and ethnic disparities in HIV care. A long-serving member of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV, Dr. King brings decades of clinical expertise, policy insight, and community commitment to the Commission's mission of advancing equitable, high-quality HIV prevention and care across the county.