

2020 Bio

Gianina Irlando

Gia Irlando is the Principal at Irlando Consulting, LLC, having recently left the Denver Office of the Independent Monitor as the Community Relations Ombudsman. This opportunity allows Gia to use her extensive community network, skills and experience for greater impact on oversight and community building. She is currently working with several jurisdictions in Colorado and California to enhance their oversight infrastructure with greater stakeholder collaboration for improved outcomes in police accountability.

For almost seven years with the Office of the Independent Monitor, Gia was responsible for outreach to Denver residents, elected officials, community leaders, and organizations. Hearing the community call for better relations between youth and law enforcement, she spearheaded the creation of the Youth Outreach Project, *Bridging the Gap: Kids and Cops*. She secured federal grant funding, oversaw the development of the curriculum and convened an expert advisory committee to guide the process. The project recently was evaluated and demonstrated effectiveness and a notable change in perceptions for youth and police to thwart the flow of youth into the juvenile justice system, and this programming is now considered evidence based. Officers receive training on disproportionate minority contact and adolescent development, and youth are trained on their constitutional rights and their responsibilities when in contact with law enforcement. Community members are trained to facilitate youth and officers during five-hour forums.

Gia is a 2014 fellow of the National Hispana Leadership Institute and a graduate of the Executive Leadership Program at the Harvard Kennedy School. Gia serves on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement and on the State Committee Colorado Working Families Party. She served as the Co-Chair of the Colorado Latino Forum and on various community boards, including the YESS Institute.

Gia attended the University of California, Berkeley and California State University, Hayward, focusing on politics, communications and ethnic studies. From a young age, she marched on picket lines for the United Farmworker movement and participated in political campaigns as the child of union organizers. Gia has worked for numerous national non-profits, labor organizations and for many years increasing political representation for people of color in elected office throughout the Southwest. In Colorado, she seated the youngest Latino on the Denver City Council and the youngest Latina and the first Latina Speaker of the State House in the US. Gia has had the great opportunity to work for state, municipal and community leaders and is an innovator in politics for candidates and issues important to low-income communities of color.