Gia Irlando is the outgoing Community Relations Ombudsman for the Denver Office of the Independent Monitor. For over six years, she has been 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.  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.

Gia is transitioning from the Office of the Independent Monitor to follow her heart and work on campaigns in the coming presidential election year. Gia is a 2014 fellow of the National Hispana Leadership Institute and a graduate of the Executive Leadership Program at the Harvard Kennedy School. She served as the Co-Chair of the Colorado Latino Forum and has served on various community boards, including the Working Families Party Colorado State Committee. She 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 and 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 Colorado 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 a innovator in politics for candidates and issues important to low-income communities of color.