

# Laura Armstrong

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## WORK EXPERIENCE

Nov 2023-  
Present

### **Environmental Justice Management Analyst** - Washington State Department of Commerce

Works with a team to implement the State's first environmental justice law: [Healthy Environment for All \(HEAL\)](#) Act. The HEAL Act passed after community advocacy and a Governor appointed Environmental Justice Task Force. The law intends to remedy the effects of harmful government policies and practices that led to environmental health disparities in communities and improve the health of all Washingtonians. Responsibilities include:

- Provides consultations and trainings across Dept of Commerce (740+ employees) and to management in the oversight of the HEAL Act implementation plan
- Organizes quarterly Office of Tribal Relations environmental justice briefing for Washington tribes
- Coordinates HEAL Act implementation across Commerce's program portfolio, including program analysis and monitoring of new program design
- Coordinates cross-division/cross-agency HEAL Act activity with other agency equity initiatives
- Tracks and monitors HEAL metrics and provide management with analysis and recommendations
- Provides expert-level consultation on compliance requirements for environmental justice assessments
- Researches, organizes, and maps datasets using ArcGIS
- Understands the law as written, communicates effectively across Commerce and supports divisions in implementing the law

Oct 2021-  
Present

### **Founder/Owner** - Laura Armstrong Consulting (bilingual), Yakima, WA ([www.lauraarmstrongconsulting.com](http://www.lauraarmstrongconsulting.com))

- Partners with organizations to articulate strategies, develop implementation plans, and build staff capacity
- Develops transition plans with boards and staffs to manage changes, succession plans, and onboarding
- Trains and coaches boards and staffs on organizations' operations, finances, budgets, and overall health
- Overhauls complex databases and cultures of work around data management
- Creates equitable employee benefits packages and compensation plans
- Trains new and emerging leaders and executive directors
- Conducts organizational assessments and evaluates organizational life cycle stages
- Coaches and trains on nonprofit finance, budgeting, and money management rooted in missions and values
- Supports leaders in understanding power dynamics to develop practices for equitable workplaces
- Facilitates Board and staff retreats and consults on board development with equity lens
- Develops financial (budgets, cash flows, profit and loss templates, etc.) tools for collective decision-making
- Trains nonprofits and individuals on nonprofit law, tax, LNI and other requirements

April 2015-  
Oct 2021

### **Executive Director** - La Casa Hogar, Yakima, WA

- Led complex projects of numerous stakeholders, including: first capital construction, renewable energy solar project, multi-year citizenship replication program, and more, amidst politically, linguistically, racially, and socially diverse communities
- Created complex strategies and managed implementation of programs over 1-6 years, always rooted in diversity, equity, inclusion and in both English and Spanish
- Modernized organization's infrastructure through designing, leading and executing overhauls of databases, IT systems, accounting software; led transition to remote work during COVID
- Co-founded multi-racial "Yakama-Yakima el Censo 2020 Coalition" to increase representation of historically undercounted communities during 2020 census
- Developed COVID-response and managed bilingual COVID-communications strategy regionally until Yakima Health District had systems in place for response
- Maintained ongoing awareness of political developments at local, state, and national levels impacting work
- Grew annual budget from \$272K to \$1.2M and organization assets from \$350K to \$2.5M
- Developed and implemented racial equity strategies addressing white privilege, systemic oppression, racism
- Developed and implemented 18-month succession plan for transition to representative executive leadership
- Trained and led board and staff in fundraising, including first organizational \$1M capital campaign in 2020
- Directly managed 6-8 team members; grew staff team from 6 FTE to 19 FTE
- Wrote, managed and reported on 10-20 grants per year
- Analyzed local, statewide, national datasets to continuously direct decisions and strategy
- Built organizational culture valuing employee and community wellness despite large local/national hostility
- Created and implemented collective decision-making, accounting and personnel processes and manuals
- Served as public spokesperson for organization and trained staff to confidently publicly represent La Casa

- Developed board from 2 engaged members to active, equity-centered, biracial and bicultural board of 10
- Obtained Department of Justice Office of Legal Access Programs accreditation to practice immigration law
- Led annual financial review process with third-party CPA firm
- Collaborated with local business leaders, city council members and nonprofit leadership

Sept 2014-  
April 2015

**Grant Writer and Farm Assistant** - Common Good City Farm, Washington D.C.

- Wrote grants for the non profit neighborhood organic farm, and assisted with manual farm labor

Sept 2014-  
April 2015

**Garden and Environmental Educator** - Washington Yu Ying Charter School, Washington D.C.

- Designed and implemented curriculum of experiential classes for ages K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade on environmental education

Sept 2013-  
Sept 2014

**Project Officer** - La Clínica del Pueblo, Washington D.C.

- Co-managed a portfolio of over 50 public and private grants and contracts, totaling over \$5.7 million
- Coordinated inter-departmentally in English and Spanish to write proposals; won over \$570,000 new funds
- Evaluated and worked with excel workbooks to report outcomes to government contracts and outcomes

Jan-Sept 2013

**Loan Operations Associate** - Acción USA, Manhattan, NY

- Evaluated client credit history, bank statements, business plans, loan amounts, cash flow
- Visited English and Spanish-speaking clients to document their stories with Client Ambassador Committee
- Evaluated tax filings and tax documents for applicants and existing clients

Sept 2012-  
March 2013

**Development Intern** - ProMujer, Manhattan, NY

- Translated Spanish reports from in-country directors to English
- Researched technology advances in the field among microfinance institutions
- Supported procurement of organization's first \$1M gift

July 2010-  
June 2012

**Project Manager and Services Coordinator** - Catholic Charities Housing Services (CCHS), Yakima, WA

- Organized with first-generation immigrant, monolingual Spanish-speaking, farmworker community to design, fundraise and physically build a local 1.5 acre park, Mabton Community Park
- Managed and trained volunteers totaling over 3,000 hours for park project
- Fundraised over \$110,000 (cash, grants, and in-kind) for Mabton Community Park and Resident Services
- Designed, implemented community-based research to direct a redesign of Resident Services Program
- Organized advocacy opportunities for immigrant farm-working families to speak with state legislators
- Developed Economic Opportunities Initiative, providing increased financial access for farm-worker residents
- Regularly engaged in public speaking with bilingual media outlets;
- Built local and statewide partnerships (including City Council and Mayor)
- Maintained budget and grant compliance
- Taught English and job readiness to immigrant and Spanish-speaking teens
- Maintained website content updates for Mabton Community Park

July 2010-  
Aug 2011

**Jesuit Volunteer** - Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest, Yakima, WA

- Developed field research and formal research for Resident Services Program
- Organized immigrant teen girls' job shadowing opportunities and recreational activities
- Taught English as a Second Language (ESL) and job readiness classes to immigrant teens
- Facilitated residents' integration into local communities by accessing local resources
- Committed to intentional housing community, living on \$80/month stipend

Aug 2009-  
May 2010

**Teaching Assistant** - Poverty Studies Department, Furman University, Greenville, SC

- Organized service learning of Poverty Studies Minor
- Planned and taught lessons on topics such as immigration, neoliberalism, economics, perspectives on poverty
- Developed website, particularly on post-undergrad opportunities

July-Aug  
2009

**Community Organizer and English Teacher** - Consuelo, Dominican Republic

- Independently fundraised to design and teach English curriculum, small business development for women, and assist in development of potable water system while living with rural, financially impoverished community.

## **EDUCATION**

- 2023 **Masters of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies- Environmental Justice and Sustainability**, Prescott College
- *Relevant Coursework:* Marine Conservation practicum, Kino Bay, MX; Agroecology practicum, Huatusco, MX; GIS Mapping; Decolonizing perspectives on the HEAL Act.
- 2022 **Advanced Spanish** - Instituto Cultural de Oaxaca, México
- 2021 **Nonprofit Accounting** – Duke University (online)
- 2020 **Advanced Business Certificate**, Foster School of Business, University of Washington
- 2019 **Nonprofit Executive Leadership Certificate**, Evans School of Public Policy, University of Washington
- 2018 **Accelerating Social Transformation Certificate**, Evans School of Public Policy, University of Washington
- 2016 **Business Certificate**, Foster School of Business, University of Washington
- 2006- 2010 **Bachelor of Arts, Political Science**, Furman University, Greenville, SC  
Magna Cum Laude. Phi Beta Kappa. *Concentrations:* Latin American Studies, Poverty Studies

## **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS / COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- 2024-Present **Board Member** - Yakima MultiCare Memorial Hospital, Yakima, WA
- 2022-Present **Citizenship legal services volunteer**, La Casa Hogar, Yakima, WA
- 2017-Present **Accredited non-Attorney Legal Representative (partial)** - Office of Legal Access Programs, US Dept. of Justice
- 2023 **Labor-based deferred action intake volunteer**, UW Immigration Law Clinic - remote
- 2022 **Campaign Team Volunteer**, Elect Dulce Gutierrez for County Commissioner, Yakima, WA
- 2021 **Equity Advisory Group, CETA (Clean Energy Transformation Act)** - Pacific Power, Yakima, WA
- 2020- 2021 **Health Equity Guiding Team** - Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital, Yakima, WA
- 2019- 2021 **Board Member (Governance and Investment Committees)** - Yakima Valley Community Foundation, Yakima, WA
- 2020- 2021 **Housing Action Plan Technical Advisory Committee** - City of Yakima, Yakima, WA
- 2017- 2022 **Leadership Development Design Team** - Statewide Capacity Funders Collaborative, Seattle, WA
- 2018- 2020 **WA “Complete Count” Census Committee - Appointed** - Office of Governor Inslee, Olympia, WA
- 2019 **Strategic Planning Core Team** - Yakima School District, Yakima, WA
- 2018 –2019 **Board Member and Equity Committee** - Washington Nonprofits Association, Seattle, WA
- 2016- 2017 **Community Integration Exploratory Committee (inaugural year)** - City of Yakima, Yakima, WA

## **PROFESSIONAL + EDUCATION AWARDS**

- Estrella Award “Business Leader of the Year” – Central Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – October 2017
- Poverty Studies Award of Achievement (Furman University) 2010
- Latin American Studies Award of Achievement (Furman University) 2010
- Political Science Faculty Award (Furman University) 2010
- Pi Sigma Alpha (American Political Science Association) 2008

## **PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS / TRAININGS GIVEN**

- “Manejo de dinero para la conservación comunitaria transparente y justa”, Prescott College Marine Conservation, 11/26/22
- “Making Asks and Giving Gratitude” Equity-based fundraising strategies, YAMA Board and staff, 3/1/21
- La Casa Hogar’s strategies on systemic change, Group Health Foundation, January 2021
- “Learning from the Pandemic” Panelist, Washington Nonprofits, 5/19/2020
- Cultural and Linguistic Competency within the medical field, Pacific NW University, October 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016
- Whiteness and White Privilege, white caucus group with Yakima Música en Accion (YAMA) staff, 9/20/2019
- Census 101, Yakima City Council, 7/2/2019
- “Collective Impact: Citizenship Education Replication at La Casa Hogar” United Way of Central Washington, 4/9/2018
- “DACA and Immigration in Yakima County” Greater Yakima Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 10/24/17
- “ACEs: What are they? Where are they?” Sunnyside Sunrise Rotary, 10/18/17
- “Immigration and Naturalization: Yakima Valley Trends” Yakima Valley Conference of Governments, 10/18/17
- “Why Don’t They Come? Outreach Strategies to Increase Latino Participation” Panel, WSU Extension, 10/18/17
- “YVCC Diversity Series- Community Panel”, 3/1/17
- Community Panel on immigration and local issues, organized by Senator Murray’s office, Ellensburg, 2/17/17

## **OTHER EXPERIENCE**

- Central WA Mountain Rescue, unit member 2021- Present
- Trail Ambassador, Cowiche Canyon Conservancy 2021- Present
- Wilderness First Responder, NOLS 2021- Present
- Agroecology Apprentice, Las Cañadas Permaculture Center, Veracruz México, 2022
- Immigrant Victim Network Intern, South Carolina Immigrant Victim Network 2009

## **LANGUAGES**

English fluency. Spanish (reading, written, speaking). Beginner French (speaking, reading, writing).