

Executive Leadership



Tamera Kohler

Chief Executive Officer

Tamera Kohler, Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH), has 19 years of senior leadership roles in state and local government specializing in poverty and homelessness, nonprofit, and mortgage lending experience, including spending more than eight years helping lead nationally-noted homelessness reduction programs in the State of Utah. Since assuming the role of CEO in November 2018, Ms. Kohler has led the RTFH in its growth as a trusted leader and expert for the San Diego County region.

Her strategic planning expertise and deep knowledge of the issues and proven solutions have framed the organization's growth, strengthened connections to the community, and fostered trusted relationships with government, civic leaders, and service providers alike. She has attracted top talent to her executive team and has increased funding for the San Diego Region to address homelessness by \$40 million annually, which she and her team administer to programs throughout the region.

At RTFH she has created a unique two-board structure to help ensure that homelessness is a rare, brief and nonrecurring issue for people. One, a 31-member advisory board that brings together a deep array of lived experience, government, civic and nonprofit leaders to enact policy and best practices to address and end homelessness. The other, a smaller non-profit board formed of executives focused on fiscal oversight and philanthropy.

Ms. Kohler joined the RTFH after having served in Seattle's Human Services Department as Division Director of Homeless Strategy and Investment where she oversaw 45 employees, a \$58 million budget, and the implementation of a new homeless strategy. Before Seattle, she served eight years at the State of Utah as the Assistant Division Director of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for the Utah Department of Workforce Services. There she oversaw federal and state funding and strategic planning for CSBG, CDBG, HOPWA, HOME, LIHEP, WAP, EITC, FEMA, TANF, the State housing loan fund, State homeless trust fund, and the Emergency Food Network. She staffed and facilitated the Utah Lt. Governor's Homeless committee with all department heads on the board and oversaw the Community Impact Board fund, including the state mineral rights resources.

Ms. Kohler has served on national committees and panels and as the Vice President of the National Association for State Community Services Programs board. She has a strong track record in community engagement, strategic planning, contracting, and the data-driven system improvements critical today to achieve measurable results and ensure resources are allocated wisely. She is well known and a trusted, effective change agent with indispensable big picture, system-level planning expertise and brings a unique connection and network to the highest level of national and state leaders in homelessness.

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies



Lahela Mattox

Chief Operating Officer

Lahela Mattox, Chief Operations Officer at the Regional Task Force on Homelessness San Diego has more than 20 years of experience in direct services and program development in behavioral health, homelessness and housing, poverty programs, and workforce development in both California and Hawaii. Since joining RTFH in 2019 Ms. Mattox supported RTFH in launching a regional Flexible Housing Pool, a nationally recognized model; provided recommendations and fiscal guidance on housing focused solutions during the public health pandemic; and continues to provide expertise in understanding funding and leveraging resources. She has secured more than \$15M in funding including a \$5M grant from the Bezos Day One Family Fund; a contract with the San Diego Port Authority to address unsheltered homelessness; and \$4M in direct funding from the State of California to implement an initiative to strengthen community connections through grassroots organizations focusing on families, the aging population, BIPOC, and other marginalized populations who represent an especially vulnerable segment of the homeless population. Ms. Mattox is also part of a statewide leadership team that focuses on ending the criminalization of individuals with mental illness by supporting proven strategies that promote early intervention, access to effective treatments, a planned reentry, and the preservation of public safety and Prior to joining RTFH, Lahela served as a Director with the State of California's Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council (HCFC), now Cal ICH. Ms. Mattox worked with California's 44 CoC's and 13 largest cities and was instrumental in executing two State funding programs of \$1.2billion and implementing the State's Housing First Policy.

Ms. Mattox is a respected professional leader, recognized for cultivating partnerships, leveraging resources, addressing racial disparities, and deploying technical assistance to local jurisdictions in addressing the homelessness crisis.



Kathryn Durant

Chief Program Officer

Kat Durant has worked at RTFH since July 2017 and currently serves as Chief Program Officer. In this role, she leads key Continuum of Care (CoC) functions, including the annual Point-in-Time Count (PIT) and the CoC Program Competition, and provides technical assistance and oversight to CoC-funded programs.

Kat began her tenure at RTFH as the Point-in-Time Count Coordinator, partnering with HUD technical assistance providers to design and implement San Diego's engaged WeAllCount model, which produces more actionable data on individuals experiencing homelessness.

She also supports system-wide coordination by managing CoC membership, facilitating monthly partner meetings, and serving as the organization's HR liaison.

Kat holds a Master's degree in Sociology from San Diego State University and is committed to advancing solutions to homelessness in the San Diego region.

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies



Jegnaw Zeggeye
Chief Data Officer

Jegnaw Zeggeye, MSc joined the Regional Task Force on Homelessness about 5 years ago as a data analyst. In the past five years, he has implemented several data management processes to improve system data quality, data privacy and data analysis. He also led the change of the legacy Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) project to a new software system, which is currently used by over 1000 users in San Diego and Imperial Continuum of Care (CoC). He also led data sharing and system integration projects including the integration of Homeless Management Information System with the 211 Community Information Exchange (CIE). He has been responsible for CoC required federal reports like Annual Performance Reports (APR), System Performance Measure (SPM), Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) and ESG CAPER. He is responsible for the administration of the Coordinated Entry System in the region of San Diego. He is a strategic advisor to the CEO, several committees, researchers and the community in a wide range of data related functions.

Jegnaw Zeggeye has a background in software engineering and teaching. He worked in various capacities as a software engineer for about a decade. He automated business process reengineering and implemented a variety of software solutions for a number of government agencies. He also implemented a process for software quality assurance, software project management and agile software development methodology. Prior to that, Jegnaw taught physics at both the high school and college levels for about 8 years. He has two Bachelor's degrees, one in Physics and one in Computer Science and Master's degree in Computer Science.



Carlynne Yu
Chief Financial Officer

Carlynne Yu is an accomplished financial and operations executive with a strong track record of driving organizational success through strategic planning, fiscal management, and operational optimization. With expertise in financial reporting, budgeting, policy development, grant management and compliance, Carlynne has consistently delivered results by streamlining processes, ensuring regulatory adherence, and leading high-performing teams.

Throughout her career, Carlynne has held leadership positions at organizations including the San Diego Workforce Partnership, Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation, Historical Properties Inc., and United Way of San Diego County. In these roles, she implemented robust accounting systems, spearheaded IT system upgrades, enhanced financial reporting, managed audits, and developed strategic policy revisions that improved efficiency and compliance while maintaining financial integrity.

Known for her hands-on approach and versatility, Carlynne has successfully managed diverse portfolios and delivered innovative solutions across various sectors, including nonprofit, government, hospitality, restaurant, and theater. Her expertise spans both accounting and operations management, adapting to the unique demands of each business environment. Technologically adept and results-driven, Carlynne is passionate about fostering a culture of continuous improvement within her organizations.

As a proud San Diego native, Carlynne is deeply connected to her community. She is guided by the principles of "leaving the world a little better than you found it" and "always being kind to others." She also loves roaming around town with her silly husband, two kids and fur baby.

Administration



Paulette Martinez
Executive Assistant to the CEO and Administrative Manager

Paulette Martinez has over 15 years of experience in non-profit organizations, driven by a passion for helping disadvantaged communities. Paulette had a background in Early Childhood Education and certifications in various fields, she excels in building relationships and navigating complex challenges.

In her recent role as Executive Assistant to the CEO at Feeding San Diego, Paulette managed various special projects, provided executive support, and fostered partnerships. Previously, as Partnership Coordinator, she orchestrated food programs and maintained positive relationships with community partners.

Paulette's diverse experience includes roles such as Activities Coordinator and Human Service Specialist, where she supported families and individuals in need. Beyond work, Paulette enjoys family gatherings and quality time with her daughter, exploring the zoo, and cheering on the Padres. Her dedication to her family drives her commitment to making a positive impact in San Diego.



Carrie Stemrich
Senior Office Technician

Carrie Stemrich joined the RTFH in August 2015 and previously worked with the HMIS team assisting with system training, reporting, and aiding in the transition between the former HMIS system to the current software system, and also helped to formulate and guide the provider community in using ticketing software for the first time. She currently assists with a variety of administrative assignments from capturing board meeting minutes to updating the website.

In San Diego County, Carrie previously worked in an office performing the duties of a home independent study classroom office for the La Mesa/Spring Valley school district, and she has also worked at an immigration law firm. A transplant from northeastern Pennsylvania who first arrived here after riding her bicycle across this beautiful country, she is proud of the San Diego community's drive to move forward and solve problems as they arise. She always looks forward to taking part in those solutions that embolden her work ethic.

Carrie currently lives in North Park and spends her free time visiting the zoo, gardening, reading, writing, watching tv, and whipping up new recipes - sometimes unsuccessfully, but always worth the process.

Continuum of Care (CoC)



Arash Tebbi

Senior Director of Marketing and Strategy

Arash Tebbi brings over a decade of marketing and strategy experience to the Regional Taskforce on Homelessness team. After earning his Bachelor of Science in Biology degree from UC San Diego and living here for 30 years, Arash considers San Diego home. Throughout his career, he has partnered with several nonprofits to strengthen their marketing strategies, including A Bridge for Kids, Be the Match, and Make-A-Wish. Now serving as Senior Director of Marketing and Strategy at RTFH, Arash brings that experience to drive meaningful and long-lasting impact in the San Diego community.



Alma Vasquez

CoC Program Coordinator

Alma Vasquez brings 11 years of impact-driven experience in the non-profit sector to her work addressing homelessness, including seven years of dedicated service with RTFH. As a Program Coordinator, Alma's expertise lies at the intersection of program performance and system-wide strategy. She focuses on closing service gaps through tailored technical assistance and strategic resource alignment to ensure community-wide success. Beyond advocacy, Alma is deeply involved in the mechanics of funding, contributing to major CoC grant applications and driving high-level performance reviews. She also plays a key leadership role in the Annual Point-in-Time Count, ensuring San Diego has the precise data needed to create lasting, systemic change.

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies



Jan Walton

Manager, Community Engagement

Jan Walton joined the RTFH team as Regional Outreach Coordinator for the East and South county. After years working corporate administrative positions, Jan entered the human/social service field in 2001, by way of a Ministry Outreach position. The outreach position took Jan into various county jails in the North East United States. Hearing the difficulties that the inmates faced, and the circumstances that brought them into the jail system, Jan decided she wanted to be a voice for the disadvantaged and begin working in direct service support. Two decades later, Jan has continued working with men, women, families, and Veterans in underserved circumstances to have that voice and to receive the help necessary for self-sufficiency.

Having served in various capacities as Director of Outreach, Case Manager, Career Specialist, Operations Manager, and Program Site Manager, Jan decided it was time to change from direct support services. For the change to be effective, Jan chose to go back to school and achieve her BS in Behavioral Health, from Evangel University in Springfield, MO. Now, working with the RTFH gives Jan the opportunity to work with community initiatives in a larger scope.

In her free time, Jan enjoys TV time with the family, knitting, reading, and sunrise car rides with her husband. Her latest indulgence is baking homemade bread.



Merlynn Watanabe

Director of Regional Initiatives

Merlynn Watanabe joined the RTFH in September 2024 as the nonprofit's Systems Project Manager, bringing nearly a decade of experience in the nonprofit homelessness sector. Her commitment to social justice is rooted in her upbringing in Guam, where she witnessed and experienced the profound generational impacts of poverty and homelessness. During her tenure as a senior nonprofit leader, Merlynn successfully spearheaded innovative services and advocacy campaigns that pioneered human-centered approaches in addressing critical needs like hygiene, nutrition security, menstrual health, and access to vital documents for more than 6,000 people experiencing homelessness in San Diego County. Her strategic vision and collaborative approach have been pivotal in enhancing effective homelessness solutions, supported by her expertise in research through partnerships with universities like the University of San Diego, San Diego State University, and University of Pennsylvania.

Merlynn holds a Master of Arts in Peace and Justice Studies from the University of San Diego and a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts with a concentration in International Studies from Soka University of America.



Kia Sanders

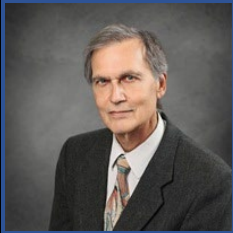
Manager, Youth Systems & Initiatives

Kia Sanders brings over a decade of experience in program management in both the education and the nonprofit sectors. She holds a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. A proud first-generation college graduate, Kia's journey into service-oriented work began when she joined AmeriCorps with City

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies

Year in 2013. It was through this experience that she discovered her passion for working with young people and the power of collaborative community impact. Kia's career expanded into the public school system, where she spent 5 years managing programs focused on student support and success.

New to the San Diego area from Seattle, Kia is excited to bring her expertise to her new role while soaking up the sunshine. She loves to travel, explore new restaurants, and immerse herself in discovering the vibrant local communities. In her free time, you can find her at one of the SD sporting events or watching a live show.



Gary Warth

Director of Government Relations, Policy and Communications

Gary Warth joined the Regional Task Force on Homelessness as the Director of Government Relations, Policy and Communications in April 2025 following a long career in journalism.

After earning a degree in journalism with a minor in sociology from San Diego State University, Gary worked his entire career in San Diego County, covering a variety of beats that included politics, education, features, public safety and government. Recognitions he has earned over the years range from a Best of Show award from the San Diego Press Club for a series on methamphetamine use to the Society of Professional Journalists' Herbert Lockwood "Woody" award for humor writing.

As a reporter, Gary had covered annual point-in-time counts for about 20 years and was the first journalist in the county to develop homelessness as a specific beat.

His work included trips into canyons and river beds with outreach workers to meet people living in encampments, interviews with people staying in shelters and safe parking lots, and meetings with local officials and service providers to learn of what is being done to help people transition from the street and into housing.

Gary strived to tell the human side of homelessness through his stories while also highlighting the best practices to overcome the crisis. As a member of RTFH, he will continue to highlight the work being done at the local, state and federal level to help people overcome homelessness.



Daniel Sturman

Manager, Housing and Unsheltered Strategies

Daniel Sturman was brought onto the RTFH team to help oversee the roll-out of the Encampment Resolution Fund grant awarded to the City of Lemon Grove. He has also served as the Bridge to Housing Committee Chair for the Alliance for Regional Solutions since January 2024, where he drives initiatives for short-term housing solutions and case management, aiming to transition unsheltered individuals toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency within North San Diego County.

Mr. Sturman's experience spans various critical functions within homeless services. As a Management Analyst for the City of Vista, he worked towards implementing the city's Homeless Strategic Plan, and oversaw significant roll-outs, such as the Buena Creek Navigation Center and the Vista Housing Innovation Pilot Program. Prior to this, at People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), he excelled in direct outreach and program management by leading teams, engaging with clients using person-centered approaches, and ensuring data compliance for accurate reporting. Earlier, his roles at Interfaith Community Services included case management and intake at the Haven House low barrier shelter. He began his

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies

journey at Operation HOPE-North County, starting as overnight security guard and transitioning to Lead Resident Attendant.



Levi Giafaglione

Digital Media & Content Coordinator

Levi is a formerly unhoused, lived-experience advocate who has dedicated years to working on the frontlines of homelessness and direct services. Drawing from personal experience, Levi has become a powerful voice for housing justice in San Diego, championing the urgent need for safe, stable, and affordable housing for all of us.

Over the years, Levi has contributed to his expertise and compassion through impactful work with organizations such as NAMI San Diego, Urban Street Angels, and South Bay Community Services (SBCS). His work has spanned outreach, resource coordination, and housing navigation—helping those facing homelessness navigate complex barriers to stability.

Levi has also harnessed the power of social media to amplify stories, challenge harmful narratives, and call for policy change. As a recognized local voice, he has spoken at key community gatherings, including the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH) Conference, where he has shared insights on solutions rooted in lived experience.

Through unwavering advocacy, Levi continues to inspire and mobilize others, working toward a San Diego where housing is accessible to everyone.

Finance



Chris Pfeifer

Director of Finance

Chris has worked with the RTFH for over a year as a consultant and was excited to join the team as a permanent employee in November 2021. He has brought more than ten years of accounting experience to his new role as the Accounting Manager. Chris has a financial background in a variety of fields, such as electronics, thermoelectrics, digital marketing, and insurance. He has a degree in Business Economics with an emphasis in Accounting from the University of California, Santa Barbara. In his free time, he enjoys swimming, biking, spending time with his wife and two sons, and coaching baseball for their local Little League.

Grants and Contracts

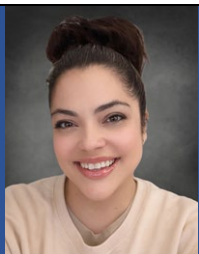


Susan Kim

Senior Grants & Contracts Manager

Susan Kim joined RTFH in August of 2022 as the Grants and Contracts Manager. She oversees grant management for RTFH funded grants, including those funded through the HUD Continuum of Care's Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (HUD CoC Y) and those funded through the California Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention program (HHAP). Susan brings more than 10 years of non-profit compliance and grant management experience to RTFH. Previous to her role at RTFH, she was the Compliance Director at Veterans Village of San Diego, with over 7 years' experience in the San Diego homeless service industry.

Susan has a degree in Political Science from University of California, San Diego. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, being a new mom to her daughter and going on hikes with her dog.



Jessica Torres

Program Analyst

Jess Torres first joined the RTFH in August 2018 as an HMIS Support Specialist. Jessica was a part of the HMIS transition and has performed monitoring, training, and privacy/security officer duties. She has carried out data analysis, financial management, research, and developed training content to support the subrecipients. Currently, she launches, supports, and provides technical assistance related to state and federal funding managed by the RTFH, including HEAP, HHAP, YHDP, and the CoC Y Renewal.

Jess has worked with the homeless population for 24 years, beginning as a volunteer in her local community in New Jersey when she met a homeless Veteran in 1998. Later on, she graduated from Registered Nursing school and received her Bachelor's to become more knowledgeable about healthcare informatics, policy issues, and improvement. She has worked with nonprofit organizations developing and implementing streamlined approaches for Behavioral Health and the Department of Defense.

Jess believes in investing in personal development, collaborative approaches, and communication improvement. She has worked to improve conditions in multiple states, including NJ, NY, VA, CA, KY, LA, and GA as a National Case Manager, a Quality Improvement Officer, and a Veteran advocate, and has provided a broader lens to solve community issues. She has also developed presentations, budget proposals, performance measurements, and strategic planning related to ethical leadership decision-making, policy issues, and public administration challenges. She is passionate about affordable housing, livable wages, and continues to strive to be a lighthouse for single parent households.

During her off hours, Jess enjoys watching shows, movies, and laughing with her children and dog. She also serves as a mentor for young girls in her local school district, is a Veteran advocate, and is wrapping up her final courses to receive her MPA.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)



Alemayehu "Alex" Feyissa

System Improvement Manager

Alemayehu joined the RTFH five years ago and utilizes performance-enhancing data analysis tools to promote and implement effective process improvements and measurement practices. He works closely with Community Solutions on the implementation of the nationwide Built for Zero initiative, a movement made up of more than 90 cities and counties that have committed to ending homelessness measurably and equitably for entire populations. He also plays a major role in analyzing veteran and youth homeless data.

Prior to his current role, Alemayehu worked as a Data Analyst for the RTFH and developed the annual Alliance for Regional Solution report that analyzes the overall progress and impact during each shelter season. He has also been responsible for the annual HUD System Performance Measure report, and he developed a variety of additional reports required by providers and local government offices. In this position, he also developed an automated HMIS billing system. Before joining RTFH, Alemayehu worked as a Solution Architect at Fairfax Technologies and was part of the implementation of an end-to-end Oracle E-Business Suite (ERP solution) for one of the largest commercial banks in East Africa. Prior to that, he worked at an information network security agency where he was responsible for developing robust and scalable system requirement functionality framework, software testing process, and system development approaches. Alongside his role, he participated in the implementation of strategy framework using the balanced scorecard framework.

Alemayehu has a BSc in Mathematics, a MSc in Information Science, and several professional certifications.



Tyler Uhlig

HMIS Director

Tyler Uhlig is a San Diego native who has been a part of the RTFH team since February 2017. Tyler came to the team with a direct homelessness service background and during his time at the RTFH, he has supported the community in many roles. He has assisted our community as a Project Analyst (Support Specialist), Data Analyst, and currently serves as the HMIS Manager operating the day-to-day activities of the HMIS and Coordinated Entry teams. Tyler has a strong belief that data drives the decisions that can help those in need and that there is power to be found and utilized within data. In his role he helps guide his team in supporting the community in all efforts that include the data collected within the HMIS as well as meeting federal reporting requirements. Tyler's goals, in addition to contributing to ending homelessness locally, include making sure that San Diego can continue to be a major contributor to the national conversation about ending homelessness and bringing best practices from that national collaboration back for implementation to help those in need locally.

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies



Cristian DeLeon

Senior Data Analyst

Cristian DeLeon graduated from the University of California, San Diego with a B.S. degree in Joint Mathematics and Economics. He joined the RTFH out of college, starting out on the Coordinated Entry team as a referrals specialist before transitioning to his current role on the HMIS team as a Data Analyst. Cristian loves being able to combine his passion for helping those in need and using data to make a positive change in the community.

Outside of work, he loves reading math and economics books, spending time with his family, and watching and playing sports.



Alex Gloudeman

Data Analyst I

Alex graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a B.S. in Mathematics and has been passionate about social services from an early age. Originally from Sacramento, he began his community outreach by volunteering and eventually working with the Girl Scouts of Northern California. After relocating for college, Alex spent his free time volunteering for Math Community Educational Outreach (Math CEO), an after-school program centered on educating underserved students about STEM careers and college scholarships and opportunities. Once he completed his degree in March 2020, he worked in sports data journalism but wanted to make a more positive impact in his professional career, leading him to search for a data analyst position in an organization more focused on community outreach. Outside of work Alex enjoys hiking, camping, frisbee, and cooking.



Kayla Moore

Data Analyst I

Kayla Moore was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, and lived and traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest. With dreams of sunnier days, she moved to Southern California. She has a passion for helping others, with a goal to assist the communities she had been a part of in any way possible. With a love of graphs, reporting, among other things, she hopes she could empower others to continue to make a positive change in the community with data-driven decisions as a data analyst with RTFH.

Moore spends her free time exploring, gaming, tending to her plants, cooking, and sometimes (and also rarely), writes comics. She hopes to become a name recognizable enough to host writing and Q&A groups in the community she grew up in to empower future generations of writers and travelers.

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies



Alice Liu

Data Analyst II

Alice Liu graduated from The University of Texas at Austin in 2022, with a BS in Biology and volunteered as a STEM tutor for underprivileged children and adults. During her college experience, Alice found a passion for data analytics and hopes to use her skills to make a positive impact. After completing her degree, Alice worked as a teacher for kids who have social and learning disabilities, while completing a data analytics and science bootcamp at the University of Texas at Austin. She is extremely excited to grow alongside RTFH and use data driven decisions to make a positive change in the community. Alice enjoys spending her free time gaming, bodybuilding, and wakeboarding.



Ali Hashimi

Data Analyst I

Ali Hashimi was born and raised in San Diego, California and graduated from San Diego State University with a B.S. in Management Information Systems. During his time at SDSU he gained experience working as a systems analyst, technical support advisor, and running a non-profit with two of his friends, which all played into his interest in data analytics. He believes that data is one of the core pieces at any type of organization because it allows for informed decision-making, provides a sense of direction, and is part of the recipe for success. Outside of work, Ali enjoys spending time watching/playing basketball, going hiking, photographing his travels, and being with family.



Molly Taing

Data Analyst I

Molly Taing graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a B.S. in Computer Science and a minor in Criminology in 2021. She interned as a software developer while studying abroad in South Korea during university and after graduating, Molly worked as a software developer for 1.5 years before taking a break to transition to a career in data analytics. Over the past year, she started volunteering at the American Red Cross, which was her first experience being involved in a non-profit organization. When not working, she enjoys taking her dog on adventures and listening to music, and is currently located in Roseville, CA.

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies



Julia McNally

Project Support Specialist

Julia McNally is a member of the HMIS Support team, providing guidance and problem-solving to partner organizations in the HMIS Trust Network. A graduate of George Washington University in Washington, D.C. with a B.A. in Criminal Justice and Communications, she loves working at the intersection of human services and policy at RTFH.

Julia's prior experience includes studying international political and justice systems at the University of Auckland in Auckland, New Zealand, aiding the CEO of a nonprofit organization in developing a post-incarceration re-entry program, and working as a Registered Behavior Technician. When not at work, she enjoys camping, continuing to learn, and taking her puppy to the beach.



Casey Cunningham

Project Support Specialist

Casey Cunningham is a graduate from the University of San Diego, with a B.A. in Behavioral Neuroscience. From the young age of six, she has always known that her purpose in life was to help others in need, and now serves as a HMIS Support Specialist at RTFH. She comes to us with a background in healthcare. Most notably, she worked as a nursing assistant in the locked geriatric psychiatry unit of a San Diego hospital, where many of her patients were experiencing homelessness at the time. While assisting her patients, she gained invaluable insight into the trials and tribulations those experiencing homelessness in San Diego encounter on a regular basis. As someone who also briefly faced homelessness as a child, she hopes to apply both her personal and professional experiences to bring about lasting change for the community. When she's not at work, she enjoys traveling, cooking, DIY projects, and reading a good book.

Coordinated Entry System (CES)



Justin Creel

**Senior Program Manager -
CES and Housing Strategy**

Justin Creel joined the RTFH in March of 2021 with over a decade of nonprofit leadership experience in homeless response systems, behavioral healthcare, and housing programs. He is passionate about creating strategies to streamline Coordinated Entry Systems and create viable, client-centric solutions to community initiatives. Covering the majority of Southwest Florida, he has led a variety of homelessness programs including homeless shelters and multiple rapid rehousing programs as well as Veteran programs. Justin earned his Bachelor of Science in Clinical Psychology and his Masters in Business Administration from Averett University. If he is not spending time with his wife, 2 daughters, and 3 dogs, it is a safe bet to assume he is somehow, somewhere, someday, on the water.

2026 RTFH Staff Member Biographies



Phylicia Applewhite

CES Systems Specialist

Phylicia Applewhite is currently attending Eastern Gateway Community College with future hopes of becoming a Psychologist. Born and raised right here in San Diego CA, Phylicia Applewhite has had first-hand experience with homelessness here in San Diego County and has dedicated her real-life experience with helping those in her community. She believes self-representation is important, and has helped implement as well as chaired an Equity and Diversity Committee. While on her quest to support her community, she has gained a fair amount of knowledge about person-centered care and believes homelessness can be prevented.