



Cristina Velez, Legal & Policy Director

Cristina Velez (she/her) comes to ASISTA from the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild (NIPNLG), where she was a Supervising Attorney engaged in national advocacy, training, community defense, and litigation. She has represented immigrant survivors of trauma and gender-based violence in many capacities throughout her career. Before joining NIPNLG, Cristina directed the immigration unit at Queens Legal Services of Legal Services NYC, specializing in removal defense and complex humanitarian relief for survivors of violence. Previously she spent several years leading the immigration practice at the HIV Law Project, where her practice encompassed humanitarian relief including VAWA, U and T visas, Battered Spouse Waivers, and asylum, as well as naturalization, removal defense, appellate, and amicus work. In between, Cristina worked at the NYU Immigrant Defense Initiative and the Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Center (now Takeroot Justice). She clerked for the Honorable Denny Chin in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, and is a graduate of Cornell Law School and Oberlin College. In her spare time, Cristina enjoys cooking, yoga, and playing with her dear rescue dog Nugget.



Kelly Head, Staff Attorney

Kelly Head (she/her) comes to ASISTA from Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (“CLASI”) in Wilmington, Delaware, where she served as a Skadden Fellow and then Staff Attorney. At CLASI, Kelly represented immigrant survivors of violence on U-visas, T-visas, VAWA Self-Petitions, Battered Spouse Waivers, Adjustment of Status, and Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. In addition to her immigration casework, Kelly represented criminalized survivors of gender-based violence in expungement and pardon cases and collaborated with stakeholders to advance progressive changes to Delaware’s expungement laws. These legislative changes benefit criminalized survivors of gender-based violence and other over-policed populations. Kelly’s experience representing survivors has given her deep substantive knowledge of survivor-based immigration relief and the effect of



immigration policies, statutes, and regulations on immigrant survivors. Licensed in Delaware, Kelly is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University and Georgetown University Law Center. In her spare time, Kelly enjoys reading, pampering her cat, and watching rom-coms.



Paula Gomez Stordy, M.Ed., Senior Director of National Training and TA Esperanza United

Paula Gomez Stordy has 29 years of experience working in the field of gender-based violence, of which 20 years were in non-profit management. She is the Senior Director of National Training and Technical Assistance for Esperanza United: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities, a national resource center with a focus on providing training, research, and policy advocacy to prevent and end domestic violence and sexual assault. Ms. Gomez Stordy directs national training and technical assistance overseeing federal grants, programming, and supervision of staff to enhance culturally responsive approaches and capacity to both mainstream and culturally specific organizations across the country. Ms. Gomez Stordy has served in key leadership positions within various institutions, including courts, hospitals, shelters, and community-based programs to enhance the safety, health and inclusion of individuals and families impacted by intimate partner violence. She also is an experienced consultant with expertise in fundraising, board development, mentoring, training providing presentations and keynotes on topics including leadership development of women of color, recruiting, hiring and mentoring a diverse workforce, organizational development, trauma and vicarious trauma to providers, executive directors, and nonprofit boards. Additionally, Ms. Gomez Stordy served as an Adjunct Professor at Merrimack College teaching Social Justice: Theory and Practice where she conducted research on the leadership of women of color.