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WE-Zine



PROGRESS, DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX

 Women
Employed

Dear %FirstName%,

On Monday, June 9th, we welcomed this year's cohort of our **Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program (SLP)**. After spending several weeks reviewing applications, conducting phone screenings, and virtual interviews, it was great to finally meet the 10 individuals who will be participating in the internship this summer! It took me back to my first day as a Summer Leader—walking into a conference room at the Women Employed (WE) office, choosing a seat, and feeling the low hum of first day jitters slowly fade as I got acquainted with my fellow interns and SLP supervisors.

The Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership program is a paid summer internship that is unlike many others. This program prepares college students for post-grad life by providing opportunities to develop their professional skills, exposure to all areas of nonprofit work, and intentional leadership development. The program is a great way for interns to learn more about WE's mission, explore social justice issues, and gain practical experience they can apply to their future careers.

The program includes a career exploration series with guest speakers who have expertise in a variety of areas, such as community organizing, law, and finance. This provides an opportunity for Summer Leaders to learn about different educational and career pathways and get invaluable advice which can positively shape their next endeavors.

As I shared in my **"She Says"** interview in 2023, what makes SLP especially meaningful is getting to work on projects with the staff. Interns get hands-on experience and contribute directly toward achieving organizational goals. As a Summer Leader, some of the projects I worked on included creating an interview guide on racial equity and inclusion (REI) for policy makers, interviewing bridge program providers to document best practices, and updating WE's core issue talking points which are used to inform staff, supporters, external partners, and the public. Additionally, WE staff foster a welcoming environment which prioritizes collaboration, continuous feedback, and mentorship. My experience gave me a close look at how the organization operates and sharpened the skills in my toolbox, which prepared me to join WE again as the Program and Research Coordinator.

I am so excited to continue to learn more about and work with this year's Summer Leaders. And you can, too! Continue reading this month's WE-Zine to meet the 2025 class.

In Solidarity,

Efrata Sasahulih
Programs and Research Coordinator

"She Said" with Raven Hargest

SHE SAYS

“

Without a doubt, The Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program shaped my career. If I had never participated in the program, I don't know if this job opportunity would have come across my

If this job opportunity would have come across my radar or if I would have been selected. I am here because of my time as a Summer Leader.



Raven Hargest

”



Raven Hargest, Women Employed's [Women's Entrepreneurship Hub \(WE Hub\)](#) Manager, first connected with Women Employed in 2022 when she was part of [The Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program \(SLP\)](#). In this month's "[She Says](#)," she talks about her experiences in the program, in her own words, and what it's like to come full circle as a staff member at Women Employed.

[Read More](#)

What WE Are Talking About

The 75 Million

I'm
one of the
75 Million.

Women Employed, along with partners across the country, is proud to launch [The 75 Million Project](#), a campaign to hold policy makers accountable and to support a national working women's agenda.

The 75 Million Project is a bold call to action to build a national women's policy agenda that reflects the realities, aspirations, and power of the 75 million working women who drive our economy, raise our families, and shape our nation.

The campaign launched with An Open Letter to Working Women, which ran in the *The New York Times*, signed by Women Employed and partner organizations.

[Learn more, read the letter, and join The 75 Million](#)

Meet the 2025 Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leaders

2025 Pattis Family Foundation
Summer Leadership Program Cohort

Summer Leadership Program Cohort



**Elizabeth
Barajas**



**Nadia
Bernal**



**Naila
Buckner**



**Betelehem
Girmay**



**Tiyandza
Mngomezulu**



**Khai
Nance**



**Angie
Ordonez**



**Lila
Shea**



**Anna
Streeto**



**Tamara
Thomas**



The Pattis Family Foundation Summer Leadership Program is Women Employed's paid summer internship. Generously sponsored by The Pattis Family Foundation and supported by two additional donors: Ora Kathleen-Flynn Family Foundation and Mesirow, the program provides a unique opportunity for professional skill building and practical experience by exposing a team of interns to leadership training, front-line research, and awareness of the barriers low-paid workers experience. The program seeks to introduce current college students to all areas of nonprofit work through workshops, guest speakers, and projects.

**We are pleased to welcome the 2025 class of Summer Leaders.
Read below to learn more about them!**

- **Ellie Barajas**, Sophomore, Malcolm X College, Major(s): English and Gender Studies
 - "Orange best represents my personality because it's bright, bold, and full of life. Orange radiates warmth, energy, and a fearless spirit—qualities I strive to embody every day."
- **Nadia Bernal**, Senior (2025 – Graduated Summa Cum Laude), Northeastern Illinois University, Majors(s): Communication, Media, and Theatre
 - "I love the singer Anitta. I love how she embraces who she is and doesn't let people put her in a box. She has 10 different personalities which is like me."
- **Naila Buckner**, Junior, Columbia College Chicago, Major(s): Creative Writing with a minor in Professional Writing
 - "My great-grandmother is one my greatest inspirations. I possess her drive and wit, which I am endlessly grateful for. I know how to push against unfavorable odds and succeed anyway, just like her."
- **Betelehem Girmay**, Sophomore, Elgin Community College, Major(s): Health Science & Molecular and Cellular Biology
 - "Purple deeply resonates with me. As an Aquarius, I find myself captivated by its connections to creativity, rebellion, and visionary thought."
- **Tiyandza Mngomezulu**, Junior, Lake Forest College, Major(s): Economics
 - "I deeply admire Audre Lorde for the way she led with both compassion and conviction. I admire how she turned personal experience into political insight, and I strive to bring that same kind of depth and purpose to the work I do."
- **Khai Nance**, Sophomore, University of Southern California, Major(s): Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
 - "I've looked up to Lorraine Hansberry for most of my life, and until writing this, I've never considered how similar we are. We're both Black, queer, female artists from Chicago. We both express our thoughts, humanity, honesty, compassion, and deep distaste for injustice through art."
- **Angie Ordonez**, Senior (Graduated 2025), Loyola University Chicago, Major(s): Psychology and Sociology
 - "An influential woman that I identify with is my best friend Marieth. She is from Waukegan, IL, and a first-generation Latina like me. We both helped each other in our journey to higher education and graduated this year."
- **Lila Shea**, Senior (Graduated 2025), Northwestern University, Major(s): English Literature and Gender & Sexuality Studies
 - "There are many different shades of blue that reflect my various traits: thoughtful, creative, dependable, honest. And I love the sky and Lake Michigan!"
- **Anna Streeto**, Junior, Loyola University, Major(s): English and Global Studies with a minor in French
 - "Magenta best represents my personality! I can be extroverted and bright, but at the end of the day, like all shades of purple, I wouldn't exist without the external forces that helped to shape me—my family and my community."
- **Tammy Thomas**, Sophomore, Kennedy King College, Major(s): Social Work
 - "I would have to say my grandmother was the most influential woman that I identify with. We both love almost to a fault."

Take Action to Protect Our Rights!

TELL SENATORS:
VOTE NO
on Andrea Lucas.



Oppose Andrea Lucas for EEOC Chair. The Senate HELP Committee is scheduled to vote tomorrow on Andrea Lucas' nomination for Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Chair, and if she gets through committee, the full Senate will vote soon. In her role as Acting EEOC Chair, Andrea Lucas has consistently proven that she is unfit for the job. With increasing concerns about workplace rights and protections across the country, we need an EEOC leader who will fight FOR equity, not against it. We must defend and protect our civil rights enforcement agencies and offices—the protection of workers' rights is on the line.

TAKE ACTION NOW

**SPEAK OUT
AGAINST
THE BIG BAD BILL**

 **Women.
Employed**



Fight the Big, Bad Bill. The House recently passed the Trump administration's massive budget reconciliation bill (H.R. 1, aka the "big, beautiful bill"). But the bill's nickname can't mask its ugly intent. You might have heard that some of the harmful provisions have been removed, but this bill is still BAD, and contains very real and devastating threats for everyday Americans. If you're a woman, a parent, a student, an immigrant, in the working class, someone who needs affordable healthcare, a senior, working in a low-paid job, a trans person—or just a person who values the humanity of your neighbors—this bill could have devastating consequences.

We can still stop this sweeping and dangerous piece of legislation in the Senate. It's vital that you make your voice heard—to be informed, speak out, and fight for what's right!

TAKE ACTION NOW

Sign up for our **Action Network** to learn about important information and actions you can take. And check out our webpage at womenemployed.org/commongood to keep up with all the latest.

Re-live *The Working Lunch*!



We are still on a high from our signature fundraising event, [The Working Lunch](#), on May 22nd! From the testimonials, honoree remarks, and keynote address to the networking reception, *The Working Lunch* is, without a doubt, the premier springtime event in Chicago. And thanks to our Diamond Media Sponsor, [CAN TV](#), we continue to re-live the magic from that day.

Check out their rebroadcast [here](#):



Special thank you to all who supported our annual fundraiser. Whether you attended in-person or virtually, donated, or volunteered, you are what made our event a success. And be sure to read all the way to the end for a special acknowledgement of this year's sponsors.

LGBTQIA+ Equal Pay Awareness Day



In a year marred by pieces of anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation and an administration targeting the community, we stand firm this LGBTQIA+ Equal Pay Awareness Day, on June 17th—acknowledging that economic insecurity is magnified for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, LGBTQIA+ People of Color, LGBTQIA+ women, immigrants, and other marginalized identities.

In addition, Trump has nominated Andrea Lucas to chair the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Lucas has no plans to enforce employment protections for transgender and nonbinary workers, and has even threatened organizations seeking to promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the workforce. As we celebrate Pride, [take action](#) to protect our rights and fight discrimination!

Join us in fighting against workplace discrimination to continue advancing equity for all.

Check out our *For the Common Good* campaign:

<https://womenemployed.org/for-the-common-good/>

Welcome to WE!



Welcome

NEW DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
AND ADMINISTRATION

.....
MARIA L. RODRIGUEZ

Please join us in welcoming our new Director of Finance and Administration, Maria Rodriguez. Maria brings over a decade of experience in nonprofit financial leadership, having served in roles such as Chief Financial Officer, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Director of Finance and Operations across a range of mission-driven organizations. Her background includes deep expertise in financial strategy, operational efficiency, and cross-functional leadership—all anchored in a strong commitment to equity and impact.

Maria is passionate about aligning financial stewardship with organizational values, ensuring that resources are not only well-managed but also purposefully directed to advance lasting change. Her thoughtful, collaborative approach makes her a valuable partner to both internal teams and external stakeholders. We are excited to have her on board as we continue to build a stronger, more equitable future for all working women.

Resources

[Salary Transparency is Now the Law in Illinois](#)

[You Deserve Fair Pay](#)

[Paid Leave in Illinois and Chicago](#)

[Know Your Rights at Work](#)

Events

[FutureReady States: A project to improve the value of workforce credentials](#)

[College Changes Everything](#)

On the Blog

[Where in the World is Women Employed?](#)

What We're Reading

[Public colleges are more diverse than ever—but anti-DEI policies threaten that progress](#)

Economic Policy
Institute

[Women more worried about economy under Trump than men, poll finds](#)

The Associated Press

[Older women front and center in 'No Kings' pro-democracy movement](#)

The 19th

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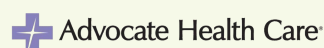
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