









Advancing Equitable Access and Use of Research to Promote Improvements in Educational Policies and Practices within the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Community Research Team

Partner	Biography of Staff
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">NORC at the University of Chicago</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div> <p>Michael López, Ph.D., Vice President of NORC’s Education and Child Development department, serves as Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI), providing overall vision and subject-matter expertise for the project. He currently provides strategic oversight and direction for the portfolio of early childhood research at NORC. Dr. López is a nationally recognized expert on early childhood research and assessments for dual language learners, with a particular emphasis on low-income as well as culturally- and linguistically-diverse populations. He brings to the project over 30 years of experience conducting applied policy research at the national, state, and local levels, including both his current role as PI on the Study of Disability Services Coordinators and Inclusion in Head Start, as well as his former roles as Co-PI on the National Study of the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) program and Federal Project Officer for the National Head Start Impact Study.</p> <p>For more information: https://www.norc.org/Experts/Pages/michael-lopez.aspx</p> </div> </div>
	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div> <p>Elizabeth Villegas, Ph.D., a Principal Research Analyst in NORC’s Education and Child Development department, serves as Project Director (PD). Recently, Dr. Villegas served as a research associate and team manager for a Multi-State Evaluation project called Abriendo Caminos, a five-year, \$3.5 million project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, which involved designing and evaluating a health promotion intervention tailored for minority populations. In addition, she has worked on numerous other research and evaluation projects addressing health disparities among vulnerable populations. Dr. Villegas provides overall day-to-day oversight and management of the project, including serving as the primary point of contact for communications with the Spencer Foundation, management of the study team, and oversight of the budget.</p> </div> </div>

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<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">The Catholic University of America</p>	 <p>Principal Investigator</p>	<p>Sandra Barrueco, Ph.D., is a Professor at The Catholic University of America, where she directs the Clinical Psychology doctoral program as well as the university-wide Latin American and Latino Studies interdisciplinary program. Dr. Barrueco’s expertise centers on assessment, methodological, and intervention approaches for young ethnically- and linguistically-diverse children and families. She is dedicated to research collaborations with the migrant and seasonal communities, including as Co-PI of the first nationally-representative survey of its kind with Migrant and Seasonal Head Start children, families, and programs. Moreover, Dr. Barrueco is committed to improving assessment and measurement approaches with immigrant children (such as via a book entitled <i>Assessing Spanish–English Bilingual Preschoolers: A Guide to Best Approaches and Measures</i>), along with research-practice-policy approaches (such as via a policy brief about parent engagement in linguistically-diverse families). Throughout all her work, Dr. Barrueco utilizes advanced statistics to advance scientific knowledge and practice with young immigrant children and families, along with close collaborations with families and the local and national programs that serve them.</p> <p>For more, see Dr. Barrueco’s webpage at The Catholic University of America.</p>
	 <p>Graduate Research Scholar</p>	<p>Haregnesh (Shay) Haile, B.S. is a second-year doctoral student in the Clinical Psychology program at The Catholic University of America (CUA). Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, Ms. Haile received her Bachelor’s of Science in Psychology at Fordham University. After graduating from Fordham, Ms. Haile worked at Massachusetts General Hospital, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, for two years. Ms. Haile is a part of the Children, Families, and Cultures focus at CUA, as she has a deep clinical and research interest in serving the needs of socioeconomically and culturally diverse children and families. Ms. Haile’s research interests center on addressing the unique ecological factors that contribute to adverse behavioral, academic, and psychosocial outcomes among underserved children and families. Guided by a social determinants of health framework, Ms. Haile aspires to conduct research, disseminate findings, and inform policy that serves the needs of vulnerable children and families. At CUA, Ms. Haile is under the mentorship and guidance of Dr. Sandra Barrueco.</p>

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<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">The National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association</p>	<div data-bbox="354 261 646 570" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="371 578 638 612" data-label="Caption"> <p>Principal Investigator</p> </div> <div data-bbox="682 248 1906 589" data-label="Text"> <p>Cleofas Rodriguez, Jr. is currently the Executive Director of the National Migrant Seasonal Head Start Association (NMSHSA) in Washington, D.C. Cleo has returned to this role after having served as the President/CEO of the United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce (UCCCC) for two years. Currently and during his previous tenure, the association grew its financial resources and delivery of professional development, parent professional development and programming. For example, now in its ninth year, Cleo initiated a Summer Internship for former Migrant and Seasonal Head Start students. This successful program was featured on Latino USA with Maria Hinojosa, NBC with Brian Williams, NBC Latino and Telemundo. On behalf of the NMSHSA, Cleo is also a recipient of the prestigious Othli Award from the Mexican Government for his work with bi-national populations.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="682 626 1906 774" data-label="Text"> <p>As the recent President/CEO of the UCCCC, Cleo and his team worked tirelessly to increase revenues, double membership and raised over 1.7 million dollars for small businesses following the devastation of hurricane Harvey. Prior to his work with the NMSHSA and the UCCCC, Cleo also served as Executive Directors of the Texas Head Start Association; and Raising Austin.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="682 812 1906 993" data-label="Text"> <p>Cleo’s parents were both migrant farm laborers who toiled tirelessly in the cotton fields across the state of Texas and other Southern states. Cleo himself did seasonal summer work in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and is proud to work on behalf of migrant and seasonal farm worker community. Cleo received a BS from Texas State University and was recently honored with the prestigious title of Distinguished Alumni.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="682 1032 1604 1066" data-label="Text"> <p>For more information: https://www.nmshsa.org/about-us/nmshsa-leadership/</p> </div>
	<div data-bbox="359 1130 651 1438" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="375 1448 634 1515" data-label="Caption"> <p>Practice Partnership Support</p> </div> <div data-bbox="682 1117 1898 1417" data-label="Text"> <p>Janna Rios is the Associate Director at the National Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Association, where she handles outreach to the NMSHSA Board of Directors and Migrant Seasonal Head Start grantees. She previously worked at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the Administration of Children Youth and Families. She worked closely with the Commissioner of ACYF, of the Children’s Bureau and the Family and Youth Services Bureau. Janna is passionate about contributing to the healthy development of young children by supporting their education and family engagement. Janna graduated with degrees in Communication and Public Relations from Texas A & M University –Corpus Christi Texas.</p> </div>

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	 <p data-bbox="380 532 636 591">Practice Partnership Support</p>	<p data-bbox="695 250 1892 506">Sofia Gilkeson is the Operations Associate at the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association. She supports work with research partners, the NMSHSA Internship Program, and policy advocacy. She previously interned for an immigration attorney, with whom she helped start a pro bono immigration clinic in her hometown of Wichita, KS. Sofia also interned in the Democracy, Human Rights and Labor bureau of the State Department in their office of African Affairs. She studied political science as a cadet at the U.S. Air Force Academy for three years and graduated from Wichita State University in 2020. Sofia speaks Spanish and French.</p>
	 <p data-bbox="380 971 636 1003">NMSHSA Scholar</p>	<p data-bbox="695 607 1892 899">Ilda Martinez is a second-year master’s student in the International Education program at The George Washington University (GWU) with a focus on migrants and refugees. She received her bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Communication at the University of South Florida. Through the NMSHSA internship program she worked in the Office for Civil Rights in the Department of Education and advocated for Head Start families. She served on the board of the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) and later joined them as a Family Support Worker. As a former RCMA child herself, she is passionate about contributing to research that will further advance and serve the migrant community.</p>
<p data-bbox="226 1154 260 1369">Research Scholar</p>	 <p data-bbox="380 1349 636 1382">Research Scholar</p>	<p data-bbox="695 1037 1892 1411">Natalia Rojas, Ph.D., is a Research Scholar on the Spencer MSHS Research-Practice Partnership project team and a National Science Foundation SEB Postdoctoral Research Fellow at New York University School of Medicine. Inspired by her second-generation immigrant status and experience as a dual language learner, Dr. Rojas’ research expertise lies in examining systems-level approaches to improving school readiness for low-income, culturally, and linguistically diverse children. Dr. Rojas began her career volunteering in preschool classrooms and working at a social policy research organization, MDRC, focusing on studying school-based interventions being implemented in Head Start, MSHS, and preschool programs across the country. In partnership with Head Start programs, local school districts, advocacy groups, and community-based organizations, she grounds her above research interests in projects that solve real problems of practice and design rich contexts to develop scholarly knowledge.</p>

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	<div data-bbox="359 256 655 561" style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div data-bbox="401 570 613 597" style="text-align: center;"> <p>Research Scholar</p> </div> <div data-bbox="695 248 1877 659"> <p>Noé Erazo, M.A., is a Research Scholar on the Spencer MSHS Research-Practice Partnership project team and a Behavioral and Community Science Ph.D. student at the University of South Florida's Rightpath Research & Innovation Center. With support and mentorship from Hispanic leaders, Erazo became the first person in his family to earn a bachelor's and master's degree. He has served the Hispanic community in many capacities, including working as an English-Spanish interpreter at a pediatric rehabilitation center. As a stepping stone, Erazo was recruited to coordinate a statewide project in Texas that worked with hundreds of public schools and Head Start programs for the School Readiness Curriculum Based Measurement System (SRCBM) study. His successful work on this study continues in Florida where he works with Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs to develop English and Spanish language assessments. Erazo's long-term goals include conducting research in bilingualism, biliteracy, and educational disparities among minority children.</p> </div>

