



## Fellows in Public Affairs Program

# MEET THE 2024-25 COHORT

We are excited to introduce the Fellows in Public Affairs 2025 cohort! During their nine months as Coro Fellows, they will examine some of the institutions of New York that influence public affairs – government, business, labor, media, political campaigns, and community organizations.



### Alexandra Blitzer (She/Her)

**BROWN UNIVERSITY '22 | WESTPORT, CT**

Alexandra (Zander) graduated magna cum laude from Brown University in December, 2022 with a degree in History (Labor & Economic History) and Early Modern World (Renaissance Literature). She received honors in History and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. At Brown, she was heavily involved with the Brown Political Review, Brown Outdoor Leadership Training, and undergraduate theater. Since graduation, she has worked as an intern at the White House Gender Policy Council and completed a Fulbright Research Grant in Bangalore, India. At the White House, she focused on women's economic security and women's health. Her Fulbright research project focused on evaluating the implementation and enforcement of India's workplace sexual harassment law. She is passionate about policy, law, gender studies, labor, and other related issues and looks forward to building a career focused on gender policy. Recreationally, she enjoys reading, traveling, writing, hiking, singing, crafting, and spending time with family and friends.



### Cassandra Vega (She/Her)

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY '24 | DAYTON, NJ**

Cassandra Vega graduated summa cum laude from Rutgers University with her B.A. in Political Science and minors in Latino & Caribbean Studies and Women's & Gender Studies. She was an Eagleton Undergraduate Associate, a Lloyd C. Gardner Fellow, an Institute for Women's Leadership Scholar, and a member of the Cap & Skull, Phi Beta Kappa, Pi Sigma Alpha, and Triota honor societies. Vega co-created the Fellows in Racial Justice Learning Community and developed the annual Racial Justice Summit, Rutgers' first tri-campus academic program for aspiring student activists, and Rutgers' first tri-campus, student-run event, respectively. Vega interned for two congresswomen, was selected as a NJ Governor's Hispanic Fellow, worked at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, represented her state at the Henry Clay Center's College Student Congress, and most recently served as a Policy Coordinator at the NJ Department of Labor. She enjoys watching the Knicks, embroidering sweaters, and trying new cuisines.



## Chanel Nejad (She/Her) [in](#)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LA '24 | WESTMINSTER, CA

Chanel's passion for transforming our nation's criminal legal system has led her to volunteer with the Prison Education Project, serve the Vera Institute of Justice as a policy intern, and participate in qualitative research through UCLA's Carceral Ecologies Lab. Aside from justice work, Chanel has professional experience with legal consumer advocacy and administrative management work. As a daughter of Persian and Korean immigrants, Chanel's multicultural upbringing has instilled a deep appreciation for her own background as well as a curiosity to learn about and engage with other cultures. During her free time, Chanel enjoys cooking, engaging with fashion, and finding ways to closely connect with her cultural heritage. In the near future, Chanel plans to attend law school with a goal of ending mass incarceration through legal advocacy and policy change. As an extroverted, altruistic individual, Chanel meaningfully connects with others and uplifts any network she is a part of.



## Eliyah Cohen (He/Him) [in](#)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LA '24 | LOS ANGELES, CA

Eliyah Cohen graduated magna cum laude from UCLA with a B.A. in Public Affairs and Entrepreneurship. He served on the ASUCLA Board of Directors, overseeing the largest student association enterprise in the U.S., and was Chief of Staff for the USAC External Vice President. Eliyah's passion at the intersection of business and social impact crystallized during his time at the UCLA Social Enterprise Academy, where he won a case competition designing a revenue-generating enterprise for a rural Louisiana nonprofit. He expanded his global business acumen through an internship at a Berlin tech startup. And as a Policy Fellow at the Los Angeles Civil Rights Department, Eliyah created an innovative merchandise line to boost departmental revenue. His internship at Eko Health further fueled his ambition to drive social impact in business, technology, and public policy. Outside of his professional pursuits, Eliyah enjoys quality time with family, playing volleyball, and learning new languages.



## Jonathan Valenzuela-Mejia (He/Him)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LA '24 | RICHMOND, CA

Jonathan is a recent graduate from UCLA in Global Studies and Public Affairs. At UCLA, he served in student government, taught a seminar on Latinx television, was the Managing Editor for the university's Latinx newsmagazine and formed a part of various student organizations. Additionally, he researched topics ranging from European climate policy to bilingualism in the Latinx community and Central American migratory patterns. He completed the Departmental Honors program with his thesis focused on Central American immigration to European nations with research conducted in both the United States and Europe. Jonathan's passion for global phenomena stems from a Guatemalan-American bicultural background and a global education having studied abroad both in France and Japan. With this global perspective, he hopes to work as an international/immigration attorney and utilize legal pathways to bring justice to those most vulnerable. He also likes to travel, bake and learn languages in his free time.



## Kiara Royer (She/Her)

WILLIAMS COLLEGE '24 | NEW YORK, NY

Kiara recently graduated from Williams College, where she majored in political science and history and received highest honors for her concentration in Asian studies. Influenced by her time growing up in New York City, Tokyo, and Hong Kong, she has long been curious about the power of global communication connecting communities and policymakers around the world. Kiara's interests in journalism, media, and voting rights led her to research digital engagement platforms for the U.S. Department of State's Office of Policy, Planning, and Resources and assist with daily media inquiries and long-term communications strategy at the New York City Mayor's Press Office. These experiences solidified her desire to pursue a career centered around electoral politics and subnational diplomacy, particularly with a focus on the relationship between the United States and Japan. In her free time, Kiara loves to explore new neighborhoods, read, and complete the Wordle.



## Quincy Johnston (She/Her) [in](#)

**SCRIPPS COLLEGE '24 | SACRAMENTO, CA**

In Sacramento, California, Quincy found her passion for politics during high school volunteering for CASC, a student-run, statewide non-profit. Here, she mentored and developed programming to support young leaders making political change. This led her to Scripps College, where she received a BA in Politics. Quincy's studies focused on power dynamics both inside and outside of class. After an unjust firing, she led a campaign to unionize residential advisors. It failed, but cemented Quincy's commitment to economic justice. For her thesis, Quincy researched residential advisor unions for the OPEIU. As President of the all-women Scripps Student Investment Fund, she led financial literacy initiatives. Quincy spent this summer as a Georgetown Labor Capital Strategies Fellow learning about labor union investment strategies. Her goal is to advance economic power for working people through leveraging capital and coalition-building. Quincy enjoys low-stakes team sports where she has a reputation for being overly competitive.



## Sada Connel (She/Her) [in](#)

**JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY '23 | BROOKLYN, NY**

At Johnson & Wales University, Sada's fondness for political science and race and ethnic studies drove her to excel academically while actively participating in campus organizations. Her commitment to community engagement led her to serve as Chapter President for Leading Women of Tomorrow, advocating for women's rights and organizational growth. During her tenure at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation as a C-Suite Intern for Waste Management in Washington, DC, Sada co-lead global diversity and inclusion initiatives and spearheaded leadership forums to promote environmental justice. At Trinity Church Wall Street, her research of housing reform and reentry from prison resulted in significant grants and legislative impact. Sada's internship at the Office of Congressman Hakeem Jeffries underscored her dedication to legislative advocacy and constituent service. With a strong skill set in advocacy and data research, Sada Connel is poised to make a meaningful impact in public administration and community development.



## Serena Prince (She/Her) [in](#)

**CONNECTICUT COLLEGE '24 | BRONX, NY**

Serena Prince is a POSSE Foundation Alumna, Pi Sigma Alpha inductee and recent Cum Laude graduate from Connecticut College with a degree in Africana Studies and Government. Throughout her undergraduate studies, Serena researched the intersectional impacts of class, race, and education; and created art pieces to express Black empowerment. Additionally, she actively engaged in social activism and public policy through Connecticut College's Community Action and Public Policy Certificate Program. Serena conducted a thesis project, combining her interests in policy and African American history, that addressed New York City's long history and maintenance of segregation, offering solutions based in Black American political resistance techniques. She presented her research at the 108th annual conference for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. As a proud Bronx native, she is dedicated to developing equitable solutions to end segregation in education, and housing in NYC by fighting for intentional integration.