



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 3, 2026

The Honorable Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Appointments to the Language Access Board

Dear Honorable Members:

Pursuant to Local Law 5 (2024), I hereby submit for your confirmation, the following individuals to the Language Access Board.

Dr. Yunju Nam

University at Buffalo- School of Social Work

Term Expires June 30, 2029

New Appointment

Faustina Palmatier, MSW

Karen Society of Buffalo

Term Expires June 30, 2029

New Appointment

Grace Karambizi

Buffalo Immigration Leadership Team

Term Expires June 30, 2029

New Appointment

Nicholas Ramirez, Esq.

Western New York Law Center

Term Expires June 30, 2029

New Appointment

Regine Ndanga, LMSW

Partnership for the Public Good

Term Expires June 30, 2029

New Appointment

David Wantuck

SignWow

Term Expires June 30, 2029

New Appointment

Andrew McLaren

Director of EEO/MWBE

Erie County Executive's Designee

Torrey Washington

Associate Deputy Comptroller

Erie County Comptroller's Designee

Lieutenant Jeremy Lehning

Erie County Sheriff's Designee

William Lorenz

Deputy Clerk – Legal

Erie County Clerk's Designee

Kathleen Callan

Chief of Administration

Erie County District Attorney's Designee

Should you have any questions regarding these appointments, please feel free to contact my office at (716) 858-8500.

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.

Erie County Executive

MCP/am

Cc: Appointees, Director Andrew McLaren

DAVID E. WANTUCK

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Operations, community engagement, and growth leader with experience advancing accessibility, Deaf community advocacy, program development, revenue growth, staff supervision, stakeholder partnerships, and organizational operations. Skilled in developing outreach plans, building client and community relationships, supporting budgets, leading teams, and expanding services across nonprofit, business, government, healthcare, education, and community settings.

CORE SKILLS

Operations Leadership | Revenue Growth Strategy | Community Engagement | Deaf Advocacy and Accessibility | Staff Supervision | Budget Monitoring | Program Development | Sales and Marketing Strategy | Customer Acquisition | Stakeholder Partnerships | ASL Education Coordination | Grant and Funding Awareness | Client Relationship Management | Training and Outreach | Compliance and HR Operations

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

SignWow USA

September 2025 - Present

Director of Operations and Growth

- Lead operations, revenue growth, and brand expansion strategies to advance communication access and advocacy for Deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.
- Develop and execute integrated sales, marketing, business development, and customer success strategies to support financial growth and organizational sustainability.
- Identify, pursue, and secure new market opportunities and customer contracts with community stakeholders, B2B partners, government agencies, healthcare providers, employers of Deaf individuals, and mission-aligned organizations.
- Build and maintain a customer acquisition pipeline to support consistent revenue growth and expanded service reach.
- Strengthen brand presence through digital platforms, social media, targeted campaigns, and community-centered outreach.
- Collaborate with the Chief Advocacy Officer to align sales, marketing, advocacy, and community engagement efforts with broader organizational goals.
- Analyze market trends, competitor activity, customer needs, and community priorities to inform strategic planning and adjust growth initiatives.
- Support investor-facing materials to increase organizational visibility and attract potential funders, partners, and supporters.
- Track and report key performance metrics, including customer acquisition, brand engagement, conversion rates, revenue growth, and campaign effectiveness.

People Inc / Deaf Access Services

May 2019 - September 2025

Community Engagement Specialist / Director of Deaf Community Engagement

- Supervised Deaf Access Services staff across community engagement, ASL education, and client service areas, including annual reviews, hiring, staff development, and disciplinary actions as needed.
- Supported development of the Deaf Access Services annual budget and monitored monthly expenses and revenue to ensure program alignment with financial goals.
- Served as liaison with IT, Human Resources, Marketing, Finance, and other internal departments to strengthen operational coordination and service delivery.
- Collaborated with People Inc. departments to promote Deaf Access Services, facilitate referrals, coordinate trainings, support ASL classes, and improve accessibility across agency programs.
- Participated as a member of the Deaf Access Services leadership team to develop and implement strategic growth goals related to Deaf community access, advocacy, and service expansion.
- Identified and recommended solutions to ensure Deaf Access Services remained a Deaf-friendly and accessible environment for staff, clients, and community members.
- Represented the organization at local, state, and national Deaf conferences and community events.
- Monitored grant projects, funding opportunities, outreach initiatives, and program development efforts related to Deaf Access Services.
- Managed ASL class planning, pricing, independent contractor agreements, and educational programming for community members, private groups, and organizational partners.

- Organized arraignment documents, supported misdemeanor and felony court case preparation, documented court decisions, and maintained case files.

Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center

January 2013 - May 2013

Human Resources Intern

- Supported HR Generalists and the Executive HR Director with compliance audits, employee records, Medicaid training, 401(k) deductions, health assessments, and employment classification documentation.
- Scanned, copied, and filed more than 10,000 documents and maintained employee records using UltiPro, Microsoft Office, SharePoint, and internet research tools.

EDUCATION

Medaille College, Buffalo, NY - Bachelor of Science in Sports Management and Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, December 2013

GPA: 3.72/4.0, Magna Cum Laude

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Erie County Disability Core Advisory Group, 2019 - 2025
- Amherst Disability Core Advisory Group, 2021 - 2024
- Empire State Association of the Deaf Board, 2020 - Present
- Buffalo History Museum - Programs and Collections Committee, 2023 - 2025

RECOGNITIONS

- Buffalo 30 Under 30 Award, 2020
- IDEA Award - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity Award, 2021
- Community Leadership Award - Deaf Access Services / People Inc, 2023

Erie County Language Access Law

Recommendations for Advisory Board Members

DR. YUNJU NAM

**Associate Professor, University Buffalo
School of Social Work**

Dr. Yunju Nam is an Associate Professor at the University at Buffalo School of Social Work, where her research centers on advancing economic security and social policy for marginalized communities, particularly immigrants and refugees. Her current work explores critical issues such as language access in navigating public systems, the economic impact of COVID-19, and the effects of rising anti-Asian hate. Dr. Nam's research is widely published in leading academic journals and supported by both public and private funders. Through her work, she contributes valuable insights that inform equitable policy solutions and community advocacy.



Email: yunjunam@buffalo.edu

Yunju has been a member of the Erie County Language Access Working Group for many years, providing critical data and population research on the top languages spoken in Erie County.

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Recommendations for Advisory Board Members

FAUSTINA PALMATIER, MSW

Executive Director at Karen Society of Buffalo

Faustina Palmatier is the Executive Director of the Karen Society of Buffalo (KSB), where she leads efforts to support and empower the local Karen and refugee communities. Originally from Myaungmya-Yangon, Burma, Faustina began as a dedicated volunteer with KSB before joining as Program Coordinator in 2020 and later becoming Executive Director in 2021. She holds a Master of Social Work from the University at Buffalo and brings over 14 years of experience in education, community outreach, and mental health advocacy. Faustina is deeply committed to helping community members navigate complex systems, access resources, and improve their well-being—especially in the area of mental health.

Faustina has been a member of the Erie County Language Access Working Group and is a pillar in the Burmese community, providing community service, public health events, and translation and liaison services for Buffalo Public Schools.



Email: fspalmatier@karenbuffalo.org

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Recommendations for Advisory Board Members

GRACE KARAMBIZI

Executive Director at Buffalo Immigration Leadership Team

Grace Karambizi is the Executive Director of the Buffalo Immigration Leadership Team (BILT), where she leads efforts to enhance the well-being of refugee and immigrant communities in Western New York. With a background in medicinal chemistry and a passion for social justice, Grace has dedicated her career to breaking down barriers in education, healthcare, and public systems that many refugees and immigrants face. She also works as an immigration specialist at Catholic Charities, assisting families with green card applications and navigating complex immigration processes. Through her leadership and advocacy, Grace empowers marginalized populations and supports their path toward stability, opportunity, and self-sufficiency.

Grace has been a member of the Erie County Language Access Working Group and has expertise on direct services for refugee resettlement, citizenship processes, and access to social services for New Americans.



Email: grace@biltbuffalo.org

Erie County Language Access Law

Recommendations for Advisory Board Members

NICHOLAS RAMIREZ, J.D.

**Staff Attorney, Western New York Law
Center**

Nicholas Ramirez is a licensed attorney with experience in both civil and criminal law. Currently a Staff Attorney for CLARO, the WNY Law Center's consumer rights law project, Nicholas is committed to delivering effective, client-focused legal representation. He is skilled in legal research, writing, and advocacy. Nicholas holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Administration from Salem University and a Juris Doctor from University at Buffalo School of Law.



Email: nramirez@wnylc.net

Nicholas has years of expertise with accessibility of legal and government systems for Spanish speaking community members in Erie County.

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Recommendations for Advisory Board Members

REGINE NDANGA, LMSW

Civic Education and Partnership Manager at Partnership for the Public Good

Regine Ndanga, LMSW, is the Civic Education and Partnership Manager at PPG, where she has led initiatives focused on language access and educational equity for refugee and immigrant communities. With a background in social work and experience as a therapist and researcher, she brings a holistic approach to advocacy, policy, and community empowerment. Regine holds a Master's in Social Work from the University at Buffalo and is dedicated to advancing justice and self-sufficiency for marginalized populations.

Email: regine@ppgbuffalo.org

Regine has led the Erie County Language Access Working Group with PPG and has a background on language accessibility research and extensive experience creating community spaces for refugee and New American communities.

