



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

September 18th, 2026

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

Re: Appointments to the Commission on the Status of Women

Dear Honorable Members:

Pursuant to the Erie County Charter Section 1705, I, Mark C. Poloncarz, Erie County Executive do hereby submit for your confirmation the following individuals to be appointed to the Erie County Commission on the Status of Women for a term ending **December 31, 2029**.

Laura Azzarella
129 Dalton Dr
Buffalo, NY 14223
New Appointment

Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact my office at 716-858-8500.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark C. Poloncarz". The signature is stylized with a large "M" and "P".

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/am

Cc: appointee, Dr. Karen King Office of Public Advocacy

LAURA AZZARELLA, PHR, MS HRM

Buffalo, NY | 716-245-5067 | Laura.Azzarella@gmail.com

Tech-forward HR leader with a 15+ year record of transforming HR departments into strategic assets, with deep expertise in leadership development and system implementation. Proven success in modernizing HR from the ground up by implementing software as a service (SuccessFactors, Kronos, ADP), improving processes, and fostering data-driven cultures of accountability.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Director of Recruiting

March 2026 - Present

Goldberg Segalla | Buffalo, NY

Appointed as the inaugural Director of Recruiting to establish and launch a data-driven, national attorney recruitment strategy for an AmLaw 200 firm. Established the Recruiting function, hiring on a team of 3 to date.

Key Results:

- **National Recruitment Strategy:** Leverage Claude AI and SurePoint attorney market data to amplify national headhunting efforts, hiring more than 60 attorneys in less than 6 months and exceeding hiring targets, conducting outreach to more than 1,000 highly qualified candidates.
- **Employer Brand:** Partner with Marketing to establish employer brand and total employer value proposition to attract passive talent. Deliverables included careers website redesign, employee referral marketing and social media program.
- **Technology Implementation:** Piloted firm AI Claude to streamline department processes. Implementing ADP Workforce Now Recruiting module to sunset legacy applicant tracking system.

Human Resources Manager (Interim Director)

March 2025 - March 2026

Astronics | East Aurora, NY

Led HR strategy for 400+ aerospace employees across multi-state corporate and subsidiary manufacturing sites, managing a team of four. Served as a key business partner to executive leadership, building talent management programs, driving HR systems transformation, and aligning total rewards with operational goals.

Key Results:

- **Compensation Strategy:** Drove enterprise-wide compensation strategy, serving as a key advisor to the C-Suite on job level creation and current workforce mapping. Leveraged Radford data to create competitive pay structures that directly link pay-for-performance with talent retention and key business outcomes.
- **Benefits Strategy & Vendor Optimization:** Directed a full-scale optimization of the total rewards program to enhance talent competitiveness, securing a 7% reduction in annual administrative costs while strengthening the company's value proposition to attract and retain key talent.
- **Talent Development & Succession Planning:** Drove a key succession planning initiative by creating the "Production Team Assistant" career path, establishing the company's first formal leadership pipeline. The inaugural cohort created a bench of 12 promotion-ready candidates, strengthening operational readiness.

Regional Talent Manager

March 2024 - March 2025

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | Buffalo, NY

Appointed as the inaugural Regional Talent Manager to establish and launch a data-driven talent strategy for a multi-state federal workforce. Tasked with building the function from the ground up, establishing HR analytics and workforce planning.

Key Results:

- **Strategic Recruitment & Workforce Optimization:** Established the organization's first-ever strategic workforce planning model to accurately forecast long-term hiring needs projecting workload to workforce needs for two years.
- **Data-Driven Hiring & Retention Analytics:** Pioneered the use of Power BI analytics to guide strategic decision-making. Provided senior leadership with previously unavailable insights into turnover trends and hiring efficiency, driving targeted retention strategies that reduced voluntary turnover by 4%.
- **Compliance & Risk Management:** Proactively led a comprehensive HR process audit, uncovering significant compliance risks in the recruitment bonus compensation program. Developed and executed a corrective action plan that resulted in over \$90,000 in direct cost savings while ensuring 100% adherence to federal risk and regulatory standards.

Associate Vice President, Human Resources
Daemen University | Buffalo, NY

January 2022 - March 2024

Recruited as the institution's first-ever cabinet-level HR executive, reporting directly to the President, with a mandate to transform the HR function from a tactical service center into a strategic pillar of the organization. Led a team of four and spearheaded a complete organizational redesign for the 1,000+ employee institution.

Key Results:

- **Executive Recruitment & Succession Strategy:** As a key part of the institutional redesign, co-led the executive search strategy with the Office of the President to build the new senior leadership team. Successfully placed four Cabinet-level leaders and multiple Directors.
- **Organizational Design & Change Management:** As a key strategic partner to the President, orchestrated a full-scale organizational redesign impacting 400+ employees. This transformation included creating a new three-college structure and building the entire job architecture and performance-based compensation program.
- **HR Technology & Data-Driven Strategy:** Drove the modernization of the HR infrastructure by implementing ADP Workforce Now HRIS modules. This transformation included creating new analytics dashboards that reduced time-to-fill by 20%, digital open enrollment, and digital annual performance reviews for campus.
- **Employee Relations & Risk Management:** Established and led a proactive employee relations and risk management strategy for the 1,000+ employee organization. This preventative approach resulted in a 100% "no probable cause" finding in all EEOC and Division of Human Rights cases, safeguarding the institution from legal and financial risk.

Senior Manager, Human Resources
Cascades | Niagara Falls, NY

2015 - 2022

Served as the senior HR Business Partner for a \$382M multi-site manufacturing and distribution business, leading a team of five. Drove the full HR strategy for 300+ union and non-union employees across two plants, directly partnering with operations leadership to align people strategy with production goals, operational excellence, and profitability.

Key Results:

- **Executive Partnership & Leadership Transformation:** As a trusted advisor to the VP of Operations, drove a critical leadership transformation by executing the replacement of two plant managers. This decisive action directly addressed performance gaps and installed new leadership aligned with the company's operational excellence and profitability goals.
- **Talent Retention & Operational Stability:** Spearheaded a critical talent retention turnaround, reducing voluntary turnover from a crippling 54% to 17% in just 12 months. Achieved this by engineering and launching a new performance-based compensation and career progression framework, which dramatically improved workforce stability and directly supported the operational excellence goals of the business.
- **HR Technology & Data-Driven Decision Making:** Led the modernization of the HR technology stack, including the successful implementation of KRONOS and the deployment of advanced analytics dashboards in SuccessFactors.
- **Employee Engagement:** Drove a 12% increase in employee engagement by designing and leading targeted initiatives focused on building a culture of accountability, recognition, and continuous improvement.

BOARD LEADERSHIP & EDUCATION

President
Buffalo Niagara HR Association Board of Directors | Buffalo, NY

September 2025 - Present

Serves as the senior elected leader for Western New York's preeminent and SHRM-affiliated chapter, representing over 300 human resources and business professionals. Sets the strategic direction for the Board of Directors, driving initiatives that advance the HR profession and strengthen the strategic partnership between HR and the regional business community.

Stony Brook University – Stony Brook, NY
Master of Science in Human Resource Management (*summa cum laude*)

Human resources Certification Institute (HRCI)
Professional in Human Resources Certification, PHR