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## **MFY Legal Services' Advocates Selected for Groundbreaking Race-Equity Training**

*Attorneys to join growing network of race-equity, anti-poverty advocates*

NEW YORK, NY, June 27, 2016 — The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law has announced that 41 Fellows, including MFY Supervising Attorney Maia Goodell and Staff Attorney Karla Johnson, have been selected to participate in the 2016 Racial Justice Training Institute (RJTI). RJTI is a national training program that builds the capacity of low-income people's advocates to deploy up-to-date racial justice advocacy skills that address the role racism plays in causing and perpetuating poverty.

"RJTI puts race front and center in the fight for equal justice," said Ellen Hemley, Vice President of Advocate Resources & Training at the Shriver Center. "As recent events throughout our country have painfully shown, it is more important now than ever to understand and address issues of race and implicit bias when advancing justice for marginalized communities."

Maia Goodell and Karla Johnson will join 41 other Fellows from 18 organizations. Working in teams, and with support from skilled faculty, RJTI participants will gain the skills and knowledge necessary to address structural racialization in housing, education, employment, healthcare, and more. The program is guided by the credence that an effective advocacy agenda must be driven by advocates immersed in their communities, who have fostered a sense of shared values with and deep understanding of their clients and partners.

"We are proud our advocates will participate in such an important and innovative program," Jeanette Zelhof, MFY Executive Director, said. "The skills and knowledge our attorneys gain from RJTI will be invaluable towards building the capacity of our organization to achieve justice for the clients and communities we serve."

Following the six-month long training, the 2016 Fellows will join a growing national alumni network of advocates working to advance a coordinated racial justice agenda.

"RJTI has certainly better equipped me to advance justice," said Daryl Atkinson, Senior Attorney at the Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCJ), who participated in RJTI in 2014 and 2015. Atkinson also currently serves as the [Justice Department's first-ever Second Chance](#)

[Fellow](#). “The tools and knowledge provided by RJTI are essential for advocates looking to achieve race-equity in their communities.”

Entering its third year, RJTI has trained 80 advocates from 42 organizations in 19 states. This alumni network continues to work in concert on several issues, including education equity and fair housing. RJTI Fellows have also provided innovative advocacy approaches and civil litigation strategies in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

“Our Fellows emerge from the program ready to help shape policies and build the future for a racially just society,” Hemley added. “The real work starts after RJTI.”

RJTI is made possible by the generous support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Pritzker Foundation. The full list of participants can be found below.

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**MFY Legal Services** envisions a society in which there is equal justice for all. MFY’s mission is to achieve social justice, prioritizing the needs of people who are low-income, disenfranchised or have disabilities. We do this through providing the highest quality direct civil legal assistance, providing community education, entering into partnerships, engaging in policy advocacy, and bringing impact litigation.

**The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law** provides national leadership in advancing laws and policies that secure justice to improve the lives and opportunities of people living in poverty. We specialize in practical solutions. We advocate for and serve clients directly, while also building the capacity of the nation’s legal aid providers to advance justice and opportunity for their clients. [www.povertylaw.org](http://www.povertylaw.org)

## 2016 RJTI Fellows

Mike Black, Montana Legal Services Association, MT  
Caitlin Borgmann, ACLU of Montana, MT  
January Contreras, Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services, AZ  
Sherisa Davis-Larry, Legal Aid Services of Oregon, OR  
Magda Derisma, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, IL  
Marcia Dinkins, Toledoans United for Social Action, OH  
Abuko Estrada, New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, NM  
Jessica Feierman, Juvenile Law Center, PA  
Jennifer Ganata, Inner City Law Center, CA  
Rachel Garland, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, PA  
Peter Gilbert, Legal Aid of North Carolina, NC  
Amanda Goad, Inner City Law Center, CA  
Erin Goeman, Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services, AZ  
Maia Goodell, MFY Legal Services, NY  
Sovereign Hager, New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, NM

Andy Huff, Governor's Office, State of Montana, MT  
Phil Hwang, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, CA  
C. Genevieve Jenkins, Inner City Law Center, CA  
Karla Johnson, MFY Legal Services, NY  
Patricia Jones, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, TN  
Samuel Keen, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, TN  
Cheryl Kleiman, Education Law Center, PA  
Lorraine Lopez, Inner City Law Center, CA  
Dorianne Mason, Ohio Justice and Policy Center, OH  
Heather McCorkle, Legal Aid of North Carolina, NC  
Sheila Miller, National Immigration Law Center, CA  
Alvaro Moises, Huerta National Immigration Law Center, CA  
Andrea Ogston, Legal Aid Services of Oregon, OR  
Jerry Pena, Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative, OH  
Rasheedah Phillips, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, PA  
Wendy Pollack, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, IL  
Nora Preciado, National Immigration Law Center, CA  
Ashley Sawyer, Education Law Center, PA  
Joyce Song, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, CA  
Yvette Stackhouse, Legal Aid of North Carolina, NC  
Jim Taylor, ACLU of Montana, MT  
Whiquitta Tobar, Juvenile Law Center, PA  
Marie Claire Tran-Leung, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, IL  
Valicia Trowbridge, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, CA  
Tangi Turner, Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services, AZ  
Marla Williams, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland, TN

## **2016 RJTI Faculty and Coaches**

Daryl Atkinson, U.S. Department of Justice; Southern Coalition for Social Justice, NC  
Aneel Chablani, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc., OH  
Antionette Dozier, Western Center on Law and Poverty, CA  
Anita Earls, Southern Coalition for Social Justice, NC  
Fran Fajana, National Center on Law and Economic Justice, NY  
Dorcas Gilmore, Consultant, MD  
Justin Hansford, Saint Louis University School of Law, MO  
Ellen Hemley, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, MA  
Patty Hernandez, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc., OH  
Janerick Holmes, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, IL  
Gavin Kearney, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, IL  
Terry Keleher, Race Forward, IL  
Bill Kennedy, The Race Equity Project, CA  
Chinh Le, Legal Aid of District of Columbia, Washington, D.C.  
Eva-Marie Malone, The Opportunity Agenda, NY  
Kimberly Merchant, Mississippi Center for Justice, MS  
Candace Moore, Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law, IL  
Ada Shen-Jaffe, Consultant, WA

Gillian Sonnad, Consultant, CA

Mona Tawatao, Western Center on Law and Poverty, CA

Kate Walz, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, IL