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National Council of Nonprofits Welcomes New Senior Staff

The National Council of Nonprofits (NCN) today announced two new senior hires. Sarah Saadian is joining NCN as Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Campaigns. Kara Young Ponder, PhD, will be NCN's new Vice President of Knowledge, Impact, and Strategy.

"We're thrilled to have Sarah and Kara joining our team, bringing their tremendous skills and expertise to NCN at this critical moment for nonprofits and the people who count on them," said Diane Yentel, President and CEO of NCN. "Advocacy and unified national campaigns are essential to successfully meeting this moment to defend and advance the nonprofit sector, and - having worked with Sarah for well over a decade - I can attest that she is exceptional at both. Kara's extensive expertise in community partnerships, research, program design and evaluation, and advancing racial equity will deepen and expand NCN's work to connect and inform nonprofits to ensure our long-term success. Their joining our highly skilled and deeply committed NCN team will further strengthen all our work."

"Beyond the DOGE-fueled challenges nonprofits are already facing, the forthcoming debates over tax policy and appropriations will require a strong voice standing up for the interests of charitable nonprofits," said Sarah Saadian. "We will continue working with our coalition partners to ensure that voice is heard."

“We all know that nonprofits are a tremendous force for the common good,” said Kara Young Ponder. “I look forward to elevating the impact of NCN’s network of networks and ensuring all nonprofits have the resources and information they need to serve their communities.”



Sarah Saadian joins NCN after serving as Senior Vice President of Public Policy and Field Organizing for the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Sarah has more than fifteen years of experience with national campaigns and successfully advancing federal policies on Capitol Hill. She graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Law after receiving her bachelor’s degree from the University of Virginia, and is a member of the Virginia State Bar.



Kara Young Ponder, PhD, most recently served as Director of Community Engagement and Racial Justice for the Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative at the University of California San Francisco. In that role, she led community partnerships, research on race and discrimination, and the internal learning and professional development program for BHHI staff. She is the primary author of [Creating Authentic, Effective Partnerships between Organizations and People with Lived Experiences: A Toolkit](#). An educator and social justice practitioner, Kara has taught in college, high school, prison, transitional living facilities, and drug recovery centers. She holds master's and doctoral degrees in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley, and a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Brown University.

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Communities thrive when nonprofits succeed. For more than 30 years, the National Council of Nonprofits has mobilized the largest network of nonprofits in the United States to achieve transformative results. We champion, connect, and inform nonprofits across the country. Join our collective efforts to ensure a connected and powerful nonprofit community equipped to champion the public good. Learn more at www.councilofnonprofits.org.