



Michelle Morales

Michelle Morales is the President of the Woods Fund Chicago. Prior to Woods Fund, Michelle led the Illinois chapter of the Mikva Challenge, a premier youth development civics organization that creates space for youth civic participation and leadership. Michelle's background has been in the field of alternative education, focusing on and advocating for educational justice, first as a teacher at the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School in Chicago's Humboldt Park community and then as Associate Director at the Alternative Schools Network. In addition, she was an active community organizer for 16 years in Chicago's Puerto Rican community, advocating for community development, education justice, economic justice, and against the rapid gentrification of the neighborhood. Michelle received a BA from DePaul University, a Master's in Special Education from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a Master's in Educational Leadership from Northeastern Illinois University. She is a fellow of Leadership Greater Chicago and had the privilege of participating in the inaugural cohort of Cultivate - a women of color leadership program developed by Woods Fund, Crossroads Fund, Chicago Community Trust and the Chicago Foundation for Women.

Michelle has used her varied career opportunities, her experiences as a first generation US born Puerto Rican woman and her platform to raise awareness and consciousness about: the power of youth voice, the continued marginalization of youth of color, utilizing community input in decision making, colonialism in Puerto Rican and the diasporic experiences of colonized peoples living in the United States. She is also a vocal advocate concerning racially equitable workplaces and strongly encourages organizations to not only apply a racial justice lens externally, but internally as well.

Michelle is honored to lead Woods Fund Chicago, one of six foundations in the city of Chicago that explicitly funds grassroots community organizing and public policy advocacy.