

## **East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)**

### **Staff Bios**

#### **Gloria Bruce, Executive Director**

Gloria is Executive Director at East Bay Housing Organizations, the leading advocacy coalition promoting affordable housing in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. She oversees all aspects of organizational development and leads several policy and coalition campaigns. Prior to joining EBHO in 2010, Gloria worked at The San Francisco Foundation, making grants to support affordable housing, safety net services, and neighborhood revitalization. Gloria has 15 years of experience in social justice and community development in her native Washington, D.C. area, Boston, and the Bay Area. She has a master's degree in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley and a B.A. from Harvard University. She serves on the boards of EveryOne Home and the California Reinvestment Coalition. She lives in Oakland with her wife and two young sons.

#### **Dessi Mia Carbajal, Policy and Advocacy Associate**

Mia completed her B.A. in American Studies with an emphasis in city and regional planning and public policy at the University of California at Berkeley. Her senior honors thesis explored the relationship between bicycle infrastructure in San Francisco's Mission District and the gentrification, accompanied by wide-scale evictions, occurring in the area. Mia has worked for the Mission Economic Development Agency surveying working-class residents aspiring to open a business or become homeowners in order to assess better ways in helping them achieve their goals through the agency's programs. She spent this past fall working at the Urban Institute in Washington D.C. researching the current state of Hispanic/Latino professionals in the real estate industry, and also housing search trends for renters living in the DC-metro area. In addition to working with EBHO, Mia also writes about various topics around the economic, political, and social status of Latinas in the U.S. for an online multigenerational Latina magazine.

#### **Rev. Sophia Dewitt, Program Director**

Sophia is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, and is a native of Fresno. She holds a Master of Divinity from Emory University and a B.A. from Mills College. Previous to joining EBHO, Rev. DeWitt served at Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM, Inc.) for 11 1/2 years directing and designing multiple programs to serve and empower refugees of all generations, from early childhood to elder programs, with a special focus on housing justice and health access. Rev. DeWitt's extensive experience in the area of housing justice with low-income communities of color includes: tenant-landlord rights and responsibilities education, helping to found the Fresno Housing Alliance, the first advocacy organization in Fresno devoted solely to affordable housing, housing element advocacy, community organizing with low-income communities for affordable housing and leadership in the most recent City and County of Fresno General Plan update and RTP/SCS processes. Sophia is excited to be joining the team at EBHO and working to further its mission of housing justice for residents of the East Bay.

**Jeff Levin, Policy Director**

Jeff has nearly 30 years experience in the field of affordable housing and community development. He works on issues such as Sustainable Communities Strategy implementation, housing elements, local housing policies to support affordable housing, and equitable development. Prior to joining EBHO in 2013, Jeff worked for the City of Oakland for over 28 years as a project coordinator, program manager, planner and policy analyst, including nearly 15 years as Housing Policy and Programs Manager. Jeff has designed a number of local housing programs, and for many years managed Oakland's HOME Program and the Oakland Redevelopment Agency's Low and Moderate Income Housing Fund. He worked on numerous policy studies and housing plans, and has worked closely with many public and private organizations at the local, regional, state and national level. He was also an activist with the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers and served as Vice President of Local 21 for 10 years. He served as the labor representative on the Oakland Redevelopment Oversight Board. A graduate of UC Berkeley, he holds a Masters Degree in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and a Masters Degree in City and Regional Planning from UC Berkeley.

**Laneisha Whitfield, Membership & Operations Associate**

Laneisha is a Richmond, CA native residing in East Oakland, CA. She is a mother, daughter, sister and student of life. Prior to coming aboard with EBHO she was employed with Urban Tilth as the Program Manager for the Richmond Food Policy Council. She has been actively serving her community for over 14 years, fighting for socio-economic justice, environmental justice, food justice and sustainable community development within her community. Community restoration and community engagement in urban/rural agriculture policy are her main areas of focus. She is passionate about insuring that both short term and long term land use policies encourage lasting and innovative community development within communities of color as well as securing the future of our families. She believes that it is important not only to develop healthy, resilient communities but to develop a community base that is healthy and resilient as well, in order to produce leaders who want to find solutions to housing, environmental and food justice issues. Because of this, she is fighting to increase community mobilization through access to and knowledge of local government, business science and policies that affect our ability to secure sustainable communities. She also sits on the Urban Tilth Board of Directors.

**Dolores Tejada, Lead Organizer**

Dolores Tejada is a community organizer who uses a disability justice and intersectionality framework to work towards collective liberation. Dolores was born and raised in the Bay Area from immigrant parents, and began organizing in high school around equitable education. They attended Dominican University and majored in Political Science. After college, she developed a youth organizing program at an independent living center, which successfully advocated for the preservation of funding for adult education, increased access on the new BART train cars, and developing and implementing a more diverse and inclusive high school curriculum. They ran a successful Get-Out-The-Vote campaign in 2016 that increased voter turnout. In 2017, they were a featured speaker at the Oakland Women's March. She is currently the Accessibility Coordinator for the San Francisco Dyke March and a member of the Nolo Board of

Directors. Dolores believes in the power of community to achieve equity, which is what drives her to organize. She has seen the shift in housing in the Bay Area throughout her lifetime, and it motivates her to build people power to achieve just housing for all. She identifies as and holds the following identities: fat, disabled, queer, femme, and brown; and uses she/her/they/them pronouns.