



## Raquel Simental

### Senior Affiliate

Raquel Simental (she/ella) is a values-driven, strategic, and collaborative leader who has dedicated her entire career to working for and with BIPOC and rural communities to help them achieve transformational change. She has 20 years of public affairs, communication, political, and strategic advising experience that she's honed in roles with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Education Trust-West, Planned Parenthood, and more.

In her most recent role, she advised the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on high-impact communication and influencer engagement strategies that lifted up the work of the foundation and its grantees and fostered partnerships with national media and education equity organizations. Formerly the Director of External Relations and Communications at Ed Trust-West, Raquel led the organization's pilot regional strategy, ESSA engagement, and various legislative campaigns. At Planned Parenthood, she built a cohesive strategy to tie together the intersections of community programs, health centers, and public information campaigns.

As someone who connects the aspirational to the operational, Raquel's expertise lies in advising on external affairs strategies that align with an organization's strategic priorities.

Raquel started her career in 2002 as a campaign manager and still serves as an informal political advisor to policymakers she's helped elect in California and Virginia. She is Dare to Lead® & The Management Center trained and gives her time mentoring the next generation of BIPOC advocates.

Raquel was born in Oakland, is a product of California public schools, and is the first in her family to attend college and graduate school. She is a bicultural and bilingual Latina who spent many of her summers on both sides of the California/Mexico border. Raquel is married to a decorated US Army veteran and they have a 6-year-old daughter. In her free time, you can find Raquel recreating her family's recipes in her kitchen, hiking and biking with her family on the Northern Virginia trails, and training with her U.S. Masters Swimming group.