

ABOUT

Maria C Velasquez, MPA

CEO Arden Shore Child and Family Services | Founder Casa Innovation & Radiante Strategy Group | Co-CEO Festival of the Diaspora



Maria Velasquez was recently named Chief Executive Officer of Arden Shore Child and Family Services, where she leads the organization's mission to strengthen children and families through trauma-informed care, prevention programs, and child welfare services. As CEO, Maria oversees the strategic direction, operational management, and program development of Arden Shore, ensuring the delivery of high-quality, equitable services to the communities they serve. Maria is committed to driving organizational growth, securing sustainable funding, and championing policies that promote child well-being, family preservation, and economic stability. Her approach integrates evidence-based practices with community-driven solutions, ensuring that Arden Shore remains a leader in providing comprehensive support to vulnerable children and families.

During the pandemic, Maria reconnected deeply with her hometown of Medellín, Colombia, where she further strengthened ties between talent in Latin America and global opportunities. She founded Casa Innovation, an inclusive ecosystem empowering social entrepreneurs, which has since merged with the Aspen Institute-born Festival of the Diaspora. This powerful convening now brings together over 400 diasporic leaders from across the Americas, serving as both a year-round support system for entrepreneurs and a major conference to drive connections and collaboration. Through Casa Innovation and the Festival of the Diaspora, Maria and her team advocate for talent, innovation, investment, and sustainability between the United States and Latin America.

With over 15 years of experience, Maria is passionate about implementing sustainable processes and addressing systemic disparities across diverse industries, including child welfare and social services, healthcare, education, social impact enterprises, nonprofit, and local government. Her expertise encompasses capacity building, complex health and social needs, racial and ethnic equity and inclusion, landscape and gap analysis, policy, change management, organizational dynamics, communications, project management, strategic planning, and technical assistance with a focus on social determinants of health.

Maria Velasquez is the founder and principal consultant of Radiante Strategy Group (RSG), specializing in child welfare and social services, healthcare, education, social impact enterprises, nonprofits, and local government. Throughout her career, she has worked with esteemed clients, including national foundations such as the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Programs, and LatinoJustice Puerto Rican Legal and Education Fund. She has also collaborated with renowned academic institutions like the University of Pennsylvania and the University of California. In addition, RSG partners with impactful nonprofits and government entities, including the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, Wilmington Metropolitan Urban League, and Delaware State Housing Authority. Maria has also continued her LATAM presence, working with organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank, KidSave International, and Serigrafía de La Gringa, contributing to the advancement of social impact initiatives.

Maria's commitment to fostering inclusive ecosystems extends beyond consultancy. In her previous roles, she served as the Associate Director of Technical Assistance at the National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs, where she spearheaded transformative initiatives aimed at improving healthcare services and addressing social determinants of health. Additionally, Maria played a pivotal role at Ashoka's AYUDA, Inc., where she led efforts to address health disparities in underprivileged communities worldwide. These experiences have equipped Maria with a deep understanding of organizational dynamics and social impact, positioning her as a versatile leader capable of driving meaningful change.

Maria holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Services with Administration and Public Policy from the University of Delaware, a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Pennsylvania, and a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Administration.