

RESEARCH UNVEILING & DIALOGUE EVENT

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Event Panelist



Natanja Craig Oquendo

(she/her)

CEO of Boston Women's Fund

Natanja Craig Oquendo has spent her career centering the voices of Black and Brown people. At a young age, Natanja was inspired by activists defending her community from systemic injustice. Their success spurred her strong belief in grassroots organizations' power to drive change. However, after entering the sector and discovering that those most impacted by foundation investments were absent from the decision-making

tables, she was determined to change philanthropy. And she did just that by creating a comprehensive grassroots strategy from the ground up and reimagining the leadership program Boston Neighborhood Fellows for one of the largest community foundations in Massachusetts. She brings an unwavering passion for community solutions, her unique lived experience, and over 20 years of nonprofit and philanthropic expertise to her work as Executive Director of the [Boston Women's Fund](#).

Since joining Boston Women's Fund in 2020, Natanja has advanced the organization's mission to invest in, advocate for, and uplift women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals. Under Natanja's leadership, in less than three years, the Boston Women's Fund tripled their grantmaking dollars and more than doubled their grantees. She built a diverse team of passionate, innovative people dedicated to liberation, and along with the board and staff, she supported the development of the

fund's five-year strategic directions, strengthening the fund's commitment to equitable philanthropy.

Natanja speaks truth to power and is guided by the motto “do nothing about us without us.” She is committed to strategically challenging the status quo to dismantle harmful systems and rebuild while centering people with relevant lived experience. She’s a connector, uniting people and opening doors to increase access for those who have been ignored by mainstream support. In 2022, she launched Boston Women’s Fund’s first-ever Seed Funding Grant to combat Black leaders’ exclusion from philanthropy. Committed to creating spaces for women of color, Natanja also co-founded the Women of Color Leadership Circle, a program uniquely designed to tackle the impacts of isolation and white supremacy culture in the workplace. Natanja believes that when philanthropy works in true partnership with communities we can create a just world for women, girls, and gender-expansive people.

Prior to the Boston Women’s Fund, Natanja held positions at The Boston Foundation, Fidelity Investments, The Partnership, Inc., The Possible Project, and the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts. Natanja is highly involved in the larger non-profit and philanthropic community in Boston as she advises and consults several aligned organizations and leaders. Natanja was a fellow of the UMass Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy and the Black Leadership Initiative. Natanja was also a YW Boston 2023 Academy of Women Achievers honoree, named one of 2023’s Most Influential Bostonians by Boston magazine, and recently awarded the Larsen Danforth Foundation Award from Visions Inc. for her lifelong career centering the voices of Black and Brown people.

Natanja has found a home in the Boston Women’s Fund. She enjoys singing 80s love songs at karaoke, spending time with family and friends, and traveling. However, Natanja’s greatest title is that of a mother and grandmother to her three daughters, two sons, and granddaughter Mila, all of which she could not do without her loving husband Jason.