

# Sheena Solomon

## Executive Director

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With Gifford since 2007



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**Job Responsibilities:** Under the authority of the board, the Executive Director assumes total responsibility for carrying out assigned policies and operations of the Foundation. The Executive Director is authorized by the Board to direct the implementation of the organization's programs, and is responsible for the management of all staff members.

## Major Responsibilities

- Carrying out all policies and operations of the Foundation and managing all staff.
- Participating in, outsourcing, or delegating all hiring, training, supervision, evaluation, and termination of staff.
- Working intensively at individual weekly or bi-weekly meetings with various staff on professional and personal development.
- Developing agendas and content for all board and committee meetings.
- Developing educational component and outside speakers for board meetings.
- Supporting each board committee, as needed.
- Working with staff and board in considering opportunities and appropriate resources/actions for Gifford to research or address community needs and challenges.
- Working with Board President to plan and conduct orientation of new board members.

- Working with Finance Committee AND outside consultant to monitor our investment portfolio and cash requirements.
- Ensuring compliance with all regulations and laws, responding to authorities, as appropriate, including federal auditor's inquiries, updating bylaws, employee handbook, investment policies and confidentiality agreements etc.
- Working with Controller in the creation of annual budget, accurate recording of all financial transactions and monthly financial reporting.
- Assuring all operations stay within the parameters of budget, that cash requirements are managed and the annual independent audit and Federal and State filing requirements are completed.

### **Additional Activities**

- Regularly presenting or keynoting in local, regional and national meetings, webinars, panels and conferences on diversity, grassroots grantmaking, neighborhood engagement and community review of grants.
- Co-author of online article on Building Trust with grant seekers.
- Serving on local and national boards and advisory committees, including Central New York Community Foundation TLC (The Leadership Classroom) Advisory Committee; the Syracuse Economic Development Corporation Board; the Grassroots Grantmakers National Advisory Committee and board vice chair (planning of annual conference) and The Funders Network PLACES (People Learning about Community Equity & Sustainability) Advisory Board.

### **Biography**

Sheena has been at the Gifford Foundation since 2007, and was recently named Executive Director. Her prior work at the foundation had been primarily focused on expanding its community impact initiatives, as well as working with the grants management team.

Sheena has partnered and advised with the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York on neighborhood issues and served on the advisory committee of The Leadership Classroom, a project of the Central New York Community Foundation. She has been instrumental in the design and planning of Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders a leadership development training that focuses on increasing the diversity and inclusiveness of nonprofit boards.



Sheena is a 2012 graduate of the PLACES (Professionals Learning About Community Equity and Smart Growth) program, a yearlong professional development program designed to explore critical issues that affect grantmaking decisions that are responsive to the needs and assets of low-income neighborhoods and people of color. She now serves on the Advisory Board for the program. Sheena also dedicates her time by serving on local and national boards such as You Can't Fail Inc, the Syracuse Economic Development Corporation, and The Near Westside Initiative.

In her role as Executive Director she remains fully committed and engaged in racial justice and equity work.

Before joining the Foundation, Sheena spent several years working at local non-profit organizations where she developed an understanding and joy for working with people in the community. Sheena was essential in the creation and implementation of Gifford's city-wide initiative, the "What If..." Mini-Grants, which provides a resource in fostering growth in neighborhoods and strengthening the capacity of residents who are focused on making positive changes in their communities.

Sheena is passionate about fostering growth in others. She understands the need to have patience and understanding in addressing the needs of the community. She truly believes the "teaching people how to fish" concept and celebrating diversity is the best way to build and sustain strong, vibrant, and inclusive communities.

In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family and treasuring every moment because tomorrow is promised to no one. She looks forward to continuing her journey of being a confident, calm, and courageous leader.