

**Sent:** Thursday, September 19, 2024 10:10 AM

**Subject:** NCSLA Operations Update



NCSLA members,

This letter is written to provide an update on NCSLA administrative changes as we inch closer to regional and national meetings. You will recall from previous correspondence and other communications that the association's long-time Executive Director (Pam Frantz) has decided to retire. The board engaged in a very condensed and very comprehensive search for day-to-day leadership of our organization. We interviewed individuals and spoke extensively to management companies to determine the best approach. We ended up interviewing one association management firm, which impressed the board with its record of accomplishment, current list of clients, team experience, etc. I am pleased to announce that the board has contracted with Jaffe Management to lead our organization as of September 1, 2024. Our new leadership team will be Jenna Ayala and Marisha Gonzalez, both of whom we are excited to welcome to our community!

Jenna Ayala will serve as the new Executive Director. Ms. Ayala is an Association Manager at Jaffe Management, where she serves as the Executive Director for nonprofit associations. In this capacity, Jenna collaborates closely with Boards of Directors to enhance governance practices, oversee operations, and execute strategic initiatives. Her expertise extends to planning and managing events of varying sizes, ensuring seamless execution and high standards. Before joining Jaffe Management, Ms. Ayala spent five years as the Director of Administrative Services in the association management division of a professional testing company, where she served as Executive Director for multiple clients. She also gained valuable experience in commercial real estate finance with CB Richard Ellis. Ms. Ayala holds a Bachelor's degree with a concentration in Finance and Marketing, and a Master's in Business Administration, both from Bryant University.

Marisha Gonzales will assist Ms. Ayala. Marisha is a seasoned hospitality and event management professional serving as a Program Associate at Jaffe Management. Prior to joining Jaffe Management, Marisha held the role of Director of Event Operations at Information Forecast, Inc. (Infocast) in Los Angeles, CA, where she managed logistics for corporate conferences in the renewable energy industry, negotiated venue

contracts, and optimized budgets exceeding a million dollars. She also has experience as the General Manager at Seven Acre Dairy Company, where she led the pre-opening phase of transforming a historic cheese factory into a boutique hotel with multiple food & beverage outlets and outdoor event space in Madison, WI. At Seven Acre her responsibilities included construction project management, team recruitment, securing licensing and permits, technology implementation, and sustainability initiatives. Marisha's expertise extends to 10+ years of convention services management at multiple Hilton Hotel properties throughout the country. Marisha earned her Bachelor of Science in Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management from Iowa State University.

Unfortunately, the original deadline for resolving transitional issues (June 2025) proved too challenging given budgetary considerations. More specifically, the budget allocation of NCSLA funds for 2024 did NOT include funds to pay for 2 executive directors and Jaffe's other services for the entire year. The board regrettably determined that it was appropriate and fiscally responsible to move up the transition to January 1, 2025. Effectively, Pam Frantz will now be officially leaving us at year's end, although the board has agreed to pay for travel expenses (for Pam and her spouse) to the annual meeting in Hawaii. We will also celebrate Pam's contribution to our organization by hosting a retirement party at the annual meeting. This new timeline will ideally result in a 3-month period for the new team to work closely with Pam. We hope that this approach will result in a seamless transition. I personally want to extend my thanks and well wishes to Pam as she begins a new chapter of her life. Pam has been a key component to the organization's culture and success during her time here. Moving forward, though we sail on uncharted waters, we do so securely and confidently because of her dedication and hard work.

In the next 3 months, the board and our new team will be evaluating current contracts and processes. We will compare the existing operation to best practices and adjust as appropriate. Our hope is that member experience is minimally impacted during the transition. As always, the goal is to leave this organization stronger and more relevant than when we arrived. There will be additional updates circulated when appropriate. In the meantime, if you have questions, concerns, or comments, do not hesitate to contact our team. I look forward to visiting with each of you in Montana and Vermont in the next few months!

Sincerely,

*Ernest P. Legier Jr.*

President NCSLA

*Sent on behalf of President Legier by Pam Frantz, Executive Director*