

# PolicyLink

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## PolicyLink Announces Ashleigh Gardere as New President

**ATLANTA** — Today, the 2024 PolicyLink Equity Summit kicked off with the announcement that [Ashleigh Gardere](#) will serve as the President of [PolicyLink](#), a national research and action institution working to build a future where all people in the United States of America can participate in a flourishing multiracial democracy, prosper in an equitable economy, and live in thriving communities of opportunity. Gardere is a leader dedicated to a future where everyone in the nation can thrive, and has remained committed to making that future real in partnership with common and uncommon partners. Throughout her 20+ year career, she has helped accelerate systems transformation and equity through executive roles in government, business, and the nonprofit sector. As President, Gardere will co-lead the development and expansion of a national governing and economic agenda to create a flourishing, multiracial democracy, equitable economy, and thriving communities of opportunity with PolicyLink CEO Dr. [Michael McAfee](#).

“We are at a critical juncture in our nation’s history, which requires us all to ask what we can do to make this country actually live up to democracy’s promise. At PolicyLink, we are not just envisioning a better future -- we are actively constructing it. I am so honored and excited to guide this talented team as well as deepen and expand the work being done to create a nation that works for all,” said Gardere.

“Today marks the beginning of an extraordinary chapter at PolicyLink, with Ashleigh Gardere assuming the role of President to co-lead the organization with me. Ashleigh has been an essential partner for me and responsible for transformation that has strengthened our focus on results and operational excellence. As we work together to deliver on the vision, culture, and future that we are accountable to, I have no doubt that our shared leadership will create a more impactful and enduring institution,” said McAfee.

"We are a longtime supporter of PolicyLink's broad vision and local approach to strengthening the measures that government and everyday people can take to make our communities thrive. The dynamic skills and background that Ashleigh brings will enable her to partner effectively with Michael to further that legacy into the next generation," said Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez, PolicyLink Board Chair.

Ashleigh Gardere is a leader dedicated to a future where everyone in the nation can thrive, and has remained committed to making that future real in partnership with common and uncommon partners. Throughout her 20+ year career, she has witnessed the power of collaboration to deliver meaningful change, as she helped accelerate systems transformation and equity through executive roles in government, business, and the nonprofit sector. Now Ashleigh serves as President of PolicyLink, a research and action institute, where she is focused on redesigning the nation to work for all. She understands that realizing a flourishing multiracial democracy

requires new values and governing standards in service of our collective flourishing; new ways of working between government and community; and new ways of being, individually and as part of institutions.

Ashleigh has raised over \$350 million to support social innovation and institution-building towards this future of collective liberation. She was also recognized by Living Cities as one of the nation's Top 25 Disruptive Leaders working to close racial opportunity gaps. Before joining PolicyLink, Ashleigh served as Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of the New Orleans Business Alliance; Vice President of Community Relations at Chase Bank for Louisiana; and a senior advisor to former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, where she was the chief strategist of the Mayor's Economic Opportunity Strategy.

Ashleigh is the Board Chair of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, which partners with organizations and networks to alleviate poverty and increase social and economic justice in 11 Southern States. She holds a bachelor's degree in Urban Studies from New York University and a master's degree in Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, where she was a Public Policy and International Affairs Fellow. She is proud to be from New Orleans, where she lives with her husband and two sons.

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