

## Mayor Steve Adler's Staff



**John-Michael Vincent Cortez** – Chief of Staff

A life-long resident of Central Texas, John-Michael Vincent Cortez holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in International Business from The McCombs School of Business at The University of Texas at Austin and a Master's of Science in Community and Regional Planning from UT's School of Architecture. He is a graduate of the Hispanic Austin Leadership program and Leadership Austin Essential Program, and was recently named a Fellow of the Next Generation Project Texas at the at the Robert S. Strauss Center for International

Security and Law at UT-Austin.

Mr. Cortez's passion for public service is evidenced by his leadership roles in several community organizations and efforts. John-Michael was elected by central Texas voters in 2009 to the Board of Trustees of the Austin Community College District, and served as Secretary of the Board in 2010 through 2012. John-Michael is currently President of the Rotary Club of East Austin, and is a Past President of the Austin History Center Association and Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation. Mr. Cortez has also previously served on the Board of Directors of the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Austin Partners in Education, Friends of the Austin Public Library, Austin Public Library Foundation, Austin Independent School District Foundation, Hispanic Scholarship Consortium of Central Texas, Liveable City, and Austin Latino Music Association. He is also a founding member of FuturoFund Austin.

Mr. Cortez also currently serves on the Advisory Councils for the Sustainable Food Center, Junior League of Austin, and The University of Texas at Austin's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. Due to his extensive work in the community, Mr. Cortez was previously appointed by the Austin City Council to serve on the Libraries for the Future Task Force, Zoning and Platting Commission, and Planning Commission.

Mr. Cortez grew up working in his family's restaurants in Austin, was previously employed as a consultant at an Austin-based business development firm, co-founded and ran a local, small business in the construction industry, and served as Outreach Director for the Office of Congressman Lloyd Doggett. He currently serves as Manager of Community Involvement for Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

John-Michael and Priscilla Guajardo Cortez, live in East Austin with their beautiful daughter, Isabella.



**Sara Hartley** – Special Advisor – Transition and Communications

Sara has worked with the City of Austin for more than 13 years, most recently as the Chief of Staff for the Public Works Department - overseeing approximately 250 full and part-time employees including the Human Resources Office, the Communications and Public Affairs Division, Intergovernmental Relations, Community Services Division, and the Office of the Director. She also worked in the City Manager's Office as the City Council Agenda Manager, then on to the Office of Emergency Management as the Community and Media Relations Manager. Sara has spent much of her time in the City working on projects and planning related to community relations, consensus building, volunteer coordination, communications, marketing and media management.

Due to her wide range of experience in the organization, Sara has been loaned by City Management to the Mayor's Office during this time of transition into a new form of government. She will assist in logistics of transition for the new Committee structure; provide agenda management, and direct communications in the interim.

Sara has a BA in Sociology, is a certified Mediator through the UT School of Law – Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution program, is an active member of the Public Relations Society of America, and part of the Leadership Austin Essential Program Class of 2014-15.



**Vanessa Sarria** – Policy and Initiative Advancement Director

Vanessa Sarria joined Austin Mayor Steve Adler's Office in January of 2015. Previously Sarria served as the Executive Director of the Community Advancement Network (CAN) for almost 8 years. CAN is a partnership of governmental, non-profit, private and faith-based organizations which leverage mutual resources to collectively improve social, health, educational and economic opportunities in Austin, TX. Prior to CAN, Sarria worked for Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Austin Travis County Health and Human Services Department, Montgomery County United Way, Austin/Travis County Integral Care, and the National Public Health and Hospital Institute in Washington, DC. Sarria served on the Board of Envision Central Texas and the National Association of Planning Councils, where she served as President from 2012-2014. She received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas at Austin in 1989 and a Master of Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, New York, in 1992.

Sarria has a working knowledge of a broad range of issues including education, health, community justice, mental health, substance use, food security, land use, immigration, environment, housing, workforce development, economic development, transportation, intergovernmental relations, community engagement, neighborhood planning, cultural competency, digital inclusion, suburbanization of poverty and other issues affecting urban/social health.



**Fred Lewis** – Senior Assistant to the Mayor

Fred Lewis has had a distinguished career as an attorney, public interest advocate, and non-profit head. An attorney for thirty years, he has served as a briefing attorney for the Texas Supreme Court, Chief of the Insurance Practices Sections of the Texas Attorney General's Office, counsel for nonprofit organizations, and in private practice. He has expertise in ethics, campaign finance, non-profit and administrative law. He has founded and led several nonprofit organizations, including Campaigns for People (which advocated for campaign finance and ethics reform) and Texans Together Education Fund (which engages lower income, disengaged communities).

He served on the City of Austin's 2012 Charter Revision Commission that recommended adopting a 10-1 governing structure. He co-wrote the citizen's charter amendment that provided for a 10-1 single member district system and an independent citizens redistricting commission.



**Sly Majid** – Chief Service Officer

Sly Majid is the Chief Service Officer for the City of Austin. Sly's role is focused on increasing the quality of life for all Austin residents through enhancing service, volunteerism, philanthropy, and engagement in the community. Prior to serving as the Chief Service Officer, Sly was the Executive Director of Eastside Community Connection – a local nonprofit organization that engaged college students in intensive internship experiences where they applied their academic interests to a real world nonprofit. Students gained experience and prospective while impacting the East Austin community. Sly's vision for the future is to

make Austin the model community for service through innovation, collaboration, and neighborhood building.



**Barbara Shack** – Assistant to the Mayor

Barbara comes to Mayor Adler's office from Ballet Austin, where she worked as Executive Administrator for more than seven years. She previously worked for the Austin Jewish Academy and attended the University of Wisconsin. Barbara is an organizer at heart, running political campaigns and small businesses in the past, and she knows how to fix anything. Her experience will be indispensable for the challenges of the Mayor's office.



**Jim Wick** – Director of Community Engagement

Jim worked as Mayor Adler’s Campaign Manager and has been campaigning professionally since 2008. In addition to helping President Obama win the state of Indiana in 2008, he led the Travis County Democratic Coordinated Campaign in 2012.

Mr. Wick lives in South Austin with his wife, Deena Estrada-Salinas. A native Texan, he graduated from the University of New Mexico with a degree in English-Creative Writing.



**Nancy Cardenas** – Constituent Services Manager

Nancy most recently worked for Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole as Executive Assistant and also spent time in Council Member Spelman’s office. Nancy attended the University of Texas at Austin and graduated with a degree in both Government and International and Global Studies. Born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley, Nancy is among the first to attend college in her family. She is a native Spanish speaker.