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## Longtime Community Organizer Working in MS Delta

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**Lorena Quiroz Lewis**, a professional with 30 years of experience in the nonprofit and public health sectors, will assist Parents for Public Schools in the Mississippi Delta, continuing the work of former PPS community coordinator Chiquikta Fountain. Fountain recently became executive director of Delta Helping Hands, a nonprofit organization in Shaw, MS.

Lewis, a native of Ecuador and a former New Yorker, is not new to the Mississippi Delta. She worked in the Delta previously, as well as in northern, coastal, and Jackson metro areas of Mississippi. Her former work in these locations involved establishing culturally and linguistically appropriate programs for people who speak limited English. Educating communities in grassroots organizing was a part of her work then and continues to be her major emphasis and specialized skill.

Lewis' longtime work in the nonprofit sector started at Goodwill Industries in New York, where she was a coordinator and manager for the English as a Second Language Program and The Arts activities.

Her well-rounded work history includes racial equity training, organizing workshops for medical screening and intervention, and creating a language access coalition. She coordinated the first language access symposium for the State of Mississippi. Currently a community fellow for the Foundation for the Midsouth, Lewis is fluent in Spanish, French and English.

She is a graduate of Delta State University, with a master's degree in education and an undergraduate degree in international studies. Lewis also has several certifications, including master trainer for Stanford University chronic disease workshops, certified lactation consultant, certified Spanish teacher, master trainer of medical interpreters, and certified national change coach.

Lewis serves on numerous boards and committees including the Mississippi Museum of Art Advisory Council, International Medical Interpreters Association, Tobacco Coalition, Diabetes Coalition, and the Language Access Coalition. She also is the outreach chairperson for the PTO in the Ridgeland Public School District.

A mother of three teens, Lewis' eldest daughter recently finished her first year of college. Her other daughters are ages 13 and 15. A champion of the public schools, Lorena has nothing short of praise for the high quality education all three daughters have received in Mississippi's public schools.

"We are pleased to have Lorena on board as a partner in our work," says Joann Mickens, executive director of PPS, Inc. "Her competence, experience, and knowledge of the Mississippi Delta will serve us well as we seek to secure a high quality public education for every child."

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**Parents for Public Schools** is a national organization of community-based chapters working with public school parents and other supporters to improve and strengthen local public schools. Founded in 1989, there are 12 PPS chapters in nine states.

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