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**Thea Montañez**

For over 20 years, Thea Montañez has dedicated herself to strengthening the community she proudly calls home through her work in government, business, and the nonprofit sector.

Currently, Thea serves as Senior Advisor to Governor Ned Lamont and Chair of the Governor’s Kids Cabinet where she leads interagency efforts to connect more Connecticut residents to opportunity, as well as efforts to develop public-private partnerships focused on that same goal.

Most recently, Thea served as Chief of Staff and then Chief Operating Officer for the City of Hartford, Connecticut, where she oversaw day-to-day operations for all thirteen municipal departments, including public safety. During that time, she helped Mayor Luke Bronin lead Hartford through unprecedented challenges, including successfully averting municipal bankruptcy and managing the City’s COVID response and recovery efforts.

As the former COO, Thea also led the development and implementation of several city-wide initiatives designed to better support the needs of survivors of community violence, as well as justice involved youth and adults, and those living with addiction, mental illness, and housing instability. In addition to her work in the public sector, Thea ran her own consulting firm, focusing on strategic communications and community affairs. She also led local grant making for The Hartford Financial Services Group.

Outside of work, Thea has volunteered her time with several nonprofit boards and commissions. She currently serves as a member of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee and Co-Chairs its Diversion Committee. She has also previously been a member of the Connecticut Judicial Selection Commission, the University of Saint Joseph Board of Trustees, and the Hartford Public Library Board of Directors. Among other awards, she was named a Center for Children’s Advocacy “Champion of Children” and previously named to Connecticut Magazine’s “40 under 40”. She is also a proud first-gen college graduate from Syracuse University.