



Rachel Branaman

Executive Leader

A dynamic and results-driven executive leader, I have a proven track record of guiding nonprofit organizations to sustainable growth, financial stability, and increased impact. My experience as an executive director includes crisis/change management strategies that successfully led two organizations to financial stability. I excel at building strategic relationships, developing innovative programs, and fostering collaborative teams to achieve mission-driven results.

Work Experience

Modern Military Association of America | <https://modernmilitary.org>

Executive Director | May 2023 - May 2025

• **Organizational Leadership**

- Led the organization through a period of internal upheaval, professionalizing the staffing structure, regaining 501(c)3 status, diversifying fundraising, and establishing operational policies.
- Wrote and secured a \$670K federal grant for FY2025, the first in the organization's 30+ year history, which grew the annual budget from \$250K to over \$1M.
- Rebuilt strategic relationships with the Pentagon, White House, Congress, and national military/veteran and LGBTQ+ advocacy organizations.

• **Advocacy & Policy**

- Provided written testimony and presented advocacy priorities to lawmakers in the House and Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees.
- Worked with lawmakers to successfully pass laws and policies that improve the well-being of LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive communities (e.g., worked with Senator Jeff Merkley's office to pass a resolution recognizing September 20th as LGBTQ+ Veterans Day).
- Successfully changed DoDEA policies, provided cultural competency training to 2,600 military family life counselors, and worked with the Offices of the Acting Secretary of Defense to support HIV+ service members and the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Records Review Initiative.

• **Program Development**

- Built and implemented new programs, including the "Resilient Heroes" suicide prevention program, "Modern Military Strong Communities" in partnership with PFLAG, a transgender legal services pro bono attorney network, and a grassroots advocacy training series.
- Created an LGBTQ+ and HIV discrimination reporting form to track concerns within the worldwide U.S. military and veteran community.
- Updated and expanded the organization's LGBTQ+ cultural competency training series using a successful fee-for-service model.

• **Communications & Fundraising**

- Served as the primary media spokesperson, responding to print, video, and radio requests from regional, national, and international news sources.
- Built and implemented rapid response media protocols for anti-equality legislation.
- Expanded readership of the organization's award-winning magazine 100-fold by transitioning from print-only to an online platform.
- Oversaw a donor database transition and the creation of a HIPAA-compliant database for mental health and legal service programs.
- Implemented a Google Ads grant to expand organizational visibility on owned and paid media.

Contact

✉ rachel@talemconsulting.com

☎ 972-998-2749

🌐 <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rachelbranaman/>

Education

Regis University

Master of Nonprofit Management
Summa Cum Laude
Capstone: Cape Town, South Africa

Leadership Women

Leadership Texas Certificate

Southern Methodist University

Human Rights Department
• Apartheid Studies in Johannesburg & Cape Town
• Human Rights: America's Dilemma
• The Impact of the Arab Spring on Israel & the Middle East

Austin College

Bachelor of Arts in French

Skills

- Executive Leadership
- Community-Centered Leadership
- Team Leadership & Management
- Strategic Planning & Execution
- Organizational Development & Change Management
- Advocacy & Public Relations
- Fundraising & Resource Development
- Financial Management & Budgeting
- Board Development & Relations
- Outcomes Evaluation
- Psycho-educational Curriculum

Board of Directors

Institute for Social Policy and Understanding

Vice Chair; Search Committee; Governance Committee; JEDI Committee
July 2022 - Present

Association of Philanthropic Counsel

Executive Board Member
August 2020 - December 2023

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, DC

Secretary; Development Chair
August 2016 - December 2023

Committees

Takoma Park Grants Review Committee

Committee Appointee by City Mayor
May 2017 - January 2021

Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Washington DC

Education Committee Member
October 2016 - December 2018

Humanitarian Hands Charities

Advisory Board
February 2013 - September 2015

Dallas Black Dance Theatre

Aspiring Leadership Society Committee
June 2013 - May 2015

International Association of Business Communications (IABC): Dallas, TX

Sponsorship & Communications Director
2012 - 2013

U.S. Peace Corps Namibia

Vice-Chair, HIV/AIDS Committee
2009 - 2011

Co-Chair, 5K Walk for Disability, Ministry of Health & Social Services
2010

Co-Chair, Camp G.L.O.W.
2010

Publications

The Power of Community: A Practical Guide to Navigating Power Dynamics for Collective Good

Publication Pending: Anticipated 2025

Don't Ask, Ghosts Tell: An LGBTQ+ Horror Anthology foreword

Published: June 2025

Building an Inclusive Board: Pathways for Education, Exploration, and Action

Published 2021

Talem Consulting | <https://www.talemconsulting.com>

Principal Consultant | May 2011 - Present

- Partner with nonprofits to build collective power, secure resources, and dismantle systems of oppression, using an intersectional and equity-based framework.
- Advise organizations on culturally responsive, justice-centered fundraising through workshops, coaching, and an inclusive leadership program.
- Use data-informed and values-driven approach to help organizations:
 - Build sustainable, equity-aligned budgets
 - Grow financial reserves without compromising mission
 - Diversify funding sources to reduce dependency
 - Launch or expand community-driven programs
 - Strengthen internal systems to reflect transparency, care, and resilience

Modern Military Association of America

Interim Executive Director | June 2023 - December 2023

See section above for details

Turtle Survival Alliance

Interim Director of Development & Consultant | February - August 2023

- Developed a comprehensive major donor cultivation and streamlined annual giving, planned giving, and corporate sponsorship opportunities.
- Built an institutional giving strategy to increase operational and U.S. based project support.
- Hired and onboarded a Grants Manager and Director of Development.
- Presented data and resources to combat discrimination, harassment, and gender based violence issues facing women and gender non-conforming individuals in the field of herpetology: "Moving Beyond Diversity: Building a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging" at the Annual Symposium on the Conservation and Biology of Turtles and Freshwater Turtles.

National Women's Health Network (NWHN)

Interim Director of Development | May 2022 - February 2023

- Created a 5-year donor forecast trend analysis to streamline expenditures and identify growth strategies.
- Engaged new, younger donors and increased awareness among older women, resulting in a consistent ROI of 7-8 times on digital acquisition, increased website traffic, and improved SEO.
- Developed a development manual and annual fundraising plan that outlined systems and procedures for incoming executive director, development director, and development associate.
- Built a consumer health and podcast driven sponsorship strategy that earned \$100K in new money in the first six months and another \$250K+ post-contract.
- Managed a successful CRM database integration, reducing annual database expenses and improving fundraising.
- Led the End of Year campaign, raising \$160,000+ and exceeding the goal by 60% and stretch goal by 6%.

Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Organizational Development Consultant, 2016 - 2022

- Led confidential "healing circles" inviting employees to hour-long group sessions to share and process issues faced in the workplace.
- Led training series on Fostering a Culture of Gender Inclusivity for national and chapter employees and board members.
- Provided long-term consulting on fundraising, grant writing, communications, and organizational development.

Publications (cont.)

Gender Inclusion, Culturally Responsive Fundraising, Board Inclusion Practices, & LGBTQ+ Inclusion topics

Articles

Advancing Philanthropy, Modern Military Magazine

Podcasts

Nonprofit Snapcast, Your Health Unlocked

Interviews

National/International press

Conferences & Speaking

Upholding Veterans Rights & Ensuring Inclusive Support

CAL VETS Leadership Summit and webinar

LGBTQ+ Introduction to Identity & Forms of Discrimination

National Organization of Veterans Advocates (NOVA) Conference, Canadian National (CN), Navy Federal Credit Union, Raytheon, USAA

Fostering a Culture of Gender Inclusivity

AFP ICON, AFP LEAD, Virginia Fundraising Institute, AFP DC, CAIR National, The Real Real, Turtle Survival Alliance

Stories from the Top': Executive Director Panel

Leadership America by Leadership Women

Building an Inclusive Board

APC Conference, AFP Central Virginia, RPCV/W

Equity in Grantmaking

AFP New Mexico

Culturally Responsive Fundraising

American Muslim Community Foundation Social Impact Accelerator, AFP ICON, Atlas Corps, CAIR National, DonorSearch, Money for Our Movements Conference, RPCV/W

Cultural Conversations: Educators Preparing Themselves to Have Difficult Classroom Conversations

Coalition on Adult Basic Education Conference

Community Collaborations for Outcomes Evaluation

Texas Campaign to Reduce Teen Pregnancy Symposium

Talem Client List (partial)

Advocacy, Research, & Social Justice

Emgage, ISPU, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy's Community Collaboration Initiative, NWHN, Northwest Credible Messenger, What's Next Washington

Child, Youth, & Family Services

Boys & Girls Clubs: Greater Dallas & Central Texas, Empower African Children, KinderUSA, National Military Family Association

Education & Health Services

Education is Freedom, Good Ole Lower East Side (GOLES), ImmunizeDC, Manna DC, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, Soul's Harbor, Urban Health Plan

Arts & Community Services

Dallas Black Dance Theatre, Dallas Chinese Community Center, Maryland Youth Pipe Band

Other Professional Experience

Alley's House

Executive Director | September 2013 - October 2015

• Organizational Leadership

- Provided day-to-day operational oversight, created internal systems, hired and supervised all staff.
- Led the agency from a 20% annual deficit to a surplus within 12 months and built a 10% operational reserve within 20 months.
- Increased organizational assets by 8.7% in the first year through an implemented savings plan.
- Collaborated with the Board of Directors to diversify board representation, grow board membership, and oversee volunteer activities and committees.

• Fundraising and Communications

- Grew annual luncheon gross revenue by 600% over 2013 to 2014.
- Applied for the agency's first federal grant and implemented a fee-for-service and service-reimbursement model.
- Increased community awareness by building relationships with new stakeholders, elected officials, and media.

• Program Development

- Developed and implemented a strategic plan, including an agency rebrand and a new community counseling model that increased participant retention by 48%.
- Received the Pam Blumenthal Community Service Award from Dallas Psychological Association for the community counseling program.
- Partnered with Austin College to develop outcome tools to measure independence and implement evaluation mechanisms.
- Partnered with Dallas Faces Race to address racial equity, build organizational equity, and create change.

Dallas Black Dance Theatre

Annual Fund Director and Consultant | June 2011 - August 2013

U.S. Peace Corps Namibia

partnered with local NGO and the Ministry of Health and Social Services HIV/AIDS and Community Development Advisor | February 2009 - March 2011

Dallas Symphony Association

Corporate Giving Manager | December 2005 - January 2009

Jewish Community Center of Dallas

Development Officer | September 2004 - November 2005

Dallas Heritage Village at Old City Park

Membership Coordinator | January 2003 - September 2004

Dallas Children's Museum

Gallery Manager and Membership Coordinator | August 2001 - December 2002