

Children's Institute Appoints Chief People & Strategy Officer, Celebrates 120 Years and Launches New Strategic Plan

Experienced nonprofit executive will lead people, culture, and support strategic priorities to advance CII's next chapter of growth, innovation, and impact.

LOS ANGELES , CA, UNITED STATES, June 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Children's Institute (CII) is

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Martine Singer, President & CEO of Children's Institute

proud to announce the appointment of Mikelle Willis as its new Chief People & Strategy Officer, a key executive leadership role that will guide the next phase of the organization's service, innovation, and impact. CII has an annual operating budget of approximately \$100 million and nearly 900 employees. Willis will lead enterprise-wide people and culture strategies while partnering closely with executive leadership to drive implementation of CII's upcoming [three-year strategic plan](#).

"We are thrilled to welcome Mikelle to Children's Institute at such a pivotal moment in our organization's history,"

said Martine Singer, President & CEO of Children's Institute. "As we prepare to launch our new three-year strategic plan, Mikelle's deep experience leading organizational transformation and enterprise strategy across mission-driven organizations will be instrumental as we strengthen our impact and continue building One CII."

Willis brings more than two decades of nonprofit leadership experience, along with a deep commitment to advancing opportunities for children and families. Most recently, she served as Chief People Officer at Leading Educators, where she led the organization's talent vision and strategy. Previously, she was Chief Strategy and Operating Officer at the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, overseeing strategic initiatives and organizational operations. Earlier in her career, Willis founded KIPP Academy of Opportunity, a college-preparatory middle school in South Los Angeles.

Willis' appointment comes as [Children's Institute marks its 120th anniversary](#), a milestone that coincides with a significant period of growth and strategic investment. In her role, Willis will

oversee human resources and strategic planning efforts to support a dedicated and compassionate team of teachers, care coordinators, and mental health professionals that are the cornerstone of CII's work and impact.

"I feel deeply honored to join Children's Institute and support the incredible people who make this work possible every day," said Willis. "At the heart of any successful strategy are the people who bring it to life. My goal is to ensure that our staff and leaders have the support, clarity, and resources they need to advance our shared mission of uplifting Los Angeles communities."

A Los Angeles native, Willis earned an MBA from Pepperdine University, an M.A. in Education from National Louis University in Chicago, and a B.S. in Business Administration from California State University, Long Beach.



Mikelle Willis

For more information about Children's Institute or to get involved, please visit www.childrens institute.org.

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