

Aaricka Washington

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Profile

Journalist and educator with university-level guest teaching experience, K-12 teaching experience and a strong record of reporting on education, race, and community. Combines professional newsroom practice with culturally responsive pedagogy. Demonstrated ability to mentor students, teach reporting and investigative skills, develop community-centered storytelling, and support diverse learners. Committed to advancing the success of students of color, first-generation students, and historically marginalized communities.

Technical and Professional Skills

- Newswriting instruction
- Multimedia reporting
- Interviewing and source development
- Editorial ethics
- Investigative reporting and public records (FOIA)
- Video production and editing (Adobe Premiere, Final Cut Pro, CapCut)
- Culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogy
- Syllabus design and outcomes assessment
- Student mentoring and constructive feedback

Education

Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism — *M.S. Journalism*, 2019

- Concentration in education reporting, investigative techniques, data, and multimedia
- Co-produced a 20-minute documentary on a struggling but progressing predominantly Black and Latino New York City high school's challenges as it

faced permanent closure due to the city's inequitable high school admissions process.

- Gained extensive experience in hypothesis testing, public records analysis, data cleaning and collaborative investigative reporting under Pulitzer Prize-winning faculty.
- Masters Project - "Pushed Out: How Education Reform Initiatives Reshaped a Historic Public School Building in Harlem"
 - Master's Project Advisor: LynNell Hancock
 - Wrote a 5,000-word feature on the negative effects of co-located schools in traditional public school buildings, and how this was connected with the bigger picture of Columbia University's eminent domain in West Harlem, which led to displacement of residents and gentrification. Focused on a public school in Harlem that was facing overutilization challenges due to being co-located with a charter school and a selective public school.
- Honors: Multimedia Covering Education course
- Reporting Advisors: Bill Grueskin and Duy Tu

Indiana University — *B.A. Journalism, 2014*

- Major: Journalism
- Minor: Sociology, African American and African Diaspora Studies
- 21st Century Scholars Program (full-tuition scholarship program)

Professional Journalism & Communications Experience

California State University, Long Beach — Part-Time Lecturer

Long Beach, CA | 2026 - Present

- Instructs undergraduate students in News Writing & Ethics, developing culturally relevant curricula covering media literacy, AP Style, First Amendment Law, SPJ's Code of Ethics, inclusive journalism and responsible AI usage.
- Educates students on the crucial, necessary role of a free press in a democratic society
- Ensures that students know the importance of being media literate
- Guides students in ethical AI usage in the journalism industry
- Facilitates students in pitching and writing news stories
- Covers essential topics such as First Amendment law, defamation and libel so that students understand their rights.

- Evaluates student learning through reporting assignments, writing exercises and constructive feedback to measure progress in journalistic skills.
- Design immersive, engaging newsroom and public relations simulations that mirrored professional career environments, training students in investigative interviewing, fact-based reporting, and crisis communication strategies.
- Earned highly positive feedback from a majority of students, who commended my passion, expertise, intentional coursework and real-world journalism assignments.

Investigative Reporters and Editors — Marketing and Communications Specialist *Los Angeles, CA | 2025 - Present*

- Develops and implements marketing campaigns for specific initiatives, with assistance of respective staff members, including annual conferences, giving and membership drives, regional workshops and fellowship programs
- Leads IRE's social media strategy and execution, including content development and graphic design.
- Writes posts and platform-specific copy designed to expand reach, grow audiences and support organizational goals.
- Designs on-brand, accessible social graphics that strengthen narrative clarity and campaign performance.
- Identifies and connects with new outreach and partnership opportunities to expand IRE's footprint within journalism and media ecosystems.
- Produces IRE's biweekly digital newsletter Quick Hits.
- Collaborates closely with leadership and program teams to ensure message alignment, consistency, and mission-driven impact
- Assists with marketing and communication tasks involving IRE training events, data and research services, scholarships, awards and other activities
- Continuously evaluates performance and refines strategy to strengthen brand authority, audience growth, and organizational influence

AfroLA — Audience Development & Revenue Manager *Los Angeles, CA | 2024–2025*

- Led audience and marketing strategy across Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads, and newsletters.
- Achieved 300% follower growth and a 1,081% increase in impressions (173K+ on Instagram).

- Grew LinkedIn followers by 104% and engagement by 110%.
- Developed partnerships, editorial strategy, and community-centered content to expand engagement and revenue.
- Strengthened organizational sustainability and visibility through analytics, SEO, and brand development.

LAist — Associate Editor

Los Angeles, CA | 2022–2024

- Collaborated on a team that built and marketed the community-centered, interactive How To LA brand, increasing newsletter subscribers by 30% (31K+).
 - Pitched and wrote original stories that received high engagement on digital. My story about the history and importance of Black cowgirls in L.A. was a top 5 Apple News story, garnering 12.8K views. The story also accumulated nearly 3K social media engagements.
- Played a pivotal role on the How To LA team, directly contributing to the podcast's production and editorial strategy. This collaboration led to the team winning Radio and Television News Association (RTNA) of Southern California's prestigious Golden Mike Award for Best Overall Podcast in 2024.
- Developed and implemented audience growth strategies, especially regarding younger, racially/ethnically diverse audiences, resulting in a 20% increase in engagement metrics.
- Consulted on and provided constructive feedback for the development of two LAist Studios podcasts — 'Inheriting' and the award-winning 'Imperfect Paradise' to ensure that they were culturally sensitive and editorially cohesive.
- Mentored nine interns within the LAist organization across writing, audio and audience engagement.

Chalkbeat — K–12 Education Reporter

Indianapolis, IN | 2020–2021

- Collaborated with editors to help multicultural, national audiences connect the dots between how Indianapolis K-12 school officials, parents and students were finding learning solutions during the height of the pandemic and nationwide trends.
- Launched a text messaging service to showcase and contextualize the most important ideas for citizens about school board decisions, increasing readership and actively engaging with 80+ new readers a month.

Austin American-Statesman — K–12 Education Reporter

Austin, TX | 2019–2020

- Covered school closures, sex education debates, policy controversies, and early COVID-19 impacts across 11 districts.
- Reported breaking news, enterprise, and investigative stories on budgets, discipline, and enrollment patterns.

Teaching Experience

KIPP Voyage Academy for Girls — Seventh Grade Social Studies Teacher

Houston, TX | 2015 - 2016

- Taught Texas History, writing and media literacy to 7th graders.
- Led 74% of 7th graders to passing their STAAR Writing Exam
- Designed a creative writing and storytelling curriculum for grades 5-8.
- Mentored 20 students in an advisory program focused on academic and emotional growth.

Foerster Elementary School — Second Grade Teacher

Houston, TX | 2014 - 2015

- Teach for America Corps Member (selected from 48,000 applicants)
- Taught Math, ELA, Social Studies and Science
- Trained at Teach for America's intensive Summer Institute (4th grade ELA/writing).
- Maintained strong family engagement and collaborated with school staff to create inclusive learning environments.
- Completed extensive training in diversity, equity, and inclusive pedagogy.

Volunteer Experience

Guest Lecturer — Columbia University (2021)

- Delivered guest lectures in reporting and investigative techniques courses.

Workshop Co-Leader, Ida B. Wells Society (2021)

Investigating Education in COVID Age

- Co-led national workshop on investigative education journalism with Bracey Harris of NBC News.
- Trained journalists on reporting inequities in school systems, source development, and data collection.

Panelist & Speaker

- EICOP HBCU in LA Program (2023): Discussed newsroom culture, reporting pathways, and professional development for underrepresented students.
- Futures of Education in Texas Symposium (Texas State University, 2020)
- Investigative Reporters & Editors - Finding your freelance rhythm (2020)

Mentorship

- California Local News Fellowship Program (2026)
- Philip Merrill College of Journalism Mentorship Program (2022)
- Long-standing mentor to college and early career journalists

AmeriCorps VISTA — Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Indianapolis, IN | 2017–2018

- Conducted outreach with 3,500+ first-generation and low-income high school and college students and families.
- Worked with counselors at 18 middle schools and 22 high schools to improve college readiness.
- Launched the Scholar 2 Scholar Mentorship Program connecting college and high school students.
- Produced data reports using Tableau to guide community engagement strategies.

Professional Affiliations

- Investigative Reporters and Editors
- National Association of Black Journalists
- Education Writers Association
- Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting
- Online News Association
- ProPublica Scholarship Program
- Journalists of Color Slack
- Indiana University Media School Alumni Board 2021 - 2022

Awards & Honors

- **Golden Mike Award** – Best Overall Podcast (Team Award), RTNA Southern California (2024)
- **Columbia Scholastic Press Association Gold Circle Award** (2014)
- **ProPublica Diversity Scholarship**, IRE Conference (2019)

Select Publications

- “Mental Health is Real Wealth: how Black men prioritize healing in a Los Angeles community”, The Guardian (2025)
- “Dads need love, too: the men creating ‘a vulnerable space’ to be with their kids, and each other”, The Guardian (2025)
- “AI in schools: Will ChatGPT help or hurt Black students?”, Word in Black (2025)
- “Black immigrants fight for visibility as Trump administration intensifies ICE raids in Los Angeles”, CALÓ News and AfroLA (2025)
- “Three months later after the Eaton fire, Black Altadeneans wrestle with ‘in-between’ period”, AfroLA (2025)
- “Kids these days: what L.A.’s Black and Latine youth say about living in America right now”, AfroLA (2025)
- “‘They tried to erase us.’ Taking up space as a Black cowgirl in L.A.” LAist (2024)
- “It’s been more than a year since LAUSD pledged to green schools. But there’s still no finalized plan in place.” LAist (2023)
- “What happened after L.A. schools cut police funds and hired mental health staff for Black students, Capital B (2022)
- Students fight for holistic mental health support in California high schools, PBS SoCal KCET (2021)
- “The pursuit of happiness”, Time Magazine (2020)
- “The Inanity of Zoom School Suspensions,” New York Times (2020)
- “How some educators are teaching antiracism to the youngest students”, PBS NewsHour (2020)
- “A college where the graduation rate for Black students has been zero percent – for years”, The Hechinger Report, co-published with Delece Smith-Barrow (2020)

More publications available upon request.

References

Available upon request