

Kimberly Merchant

Kimberly Merchant (she/her) is the Director of the Shriver Center on Poverty Law's Racial Justice Institute (RJI) and Network (RJN), where she leads and provides strategic oversight for the annual institute as well as its expanding alumni advocacy network.

RJI is a groundbreaking national leadership program, grounded in a commitment to race-equity as an integral and essential part of anti-poverty advocacy. RJI puts race front and center in the fight for equal justice and addresses the impact of structural racialization to ensure that race is considered foremost in efforts to eradicate poverty in the communities we serve. RJI has developed a network of more than 300 equal justice advocates committed to advancing a coordinated racial justice advocacy agenda.

In addition to her work with the Institute and Network, Merchant presents on the topic of race equity and justice at conferences and events, as well as serves as faculty and consultant with legal aid and public interest organizations across the nation who integrate race equity in their external advocacy and internal practice.

Merchant has twenty-three years of experience practicing law. Prior to the Shriver Center, she served as the Managing Attorney and Educational Opportunities Director at the Mississippi Center for Justice's Delta office for 6 years. She attended the University of Southern Mississippi where she received a Bachelor of Science in English, and the University of Mississippi School of Law where she received her JD. In addition to being a W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Leadership Fellow and a 2014 graduate of RJI, she holds a number of leadership roles in her local community, serving as Chairman of the City of Greenville's Municipal Election Commission; Board Member for the Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project (MVLP); Member of the Mississippi Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; and, Board Member of for the Ruben V. Anderson Education Law Clinic at Mississippi College School of Law.