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Estelle Richman appointed executive director of the Civic Coalition to Save Lives

Putting together a career spanning four decades, the notable executive will now lead Philadelphia’s collaborative effort to reduce gun violence.

By Jensen Toussaint

Just weeks after announcing the launch of the Civic Coalition to Save Lives to reduce gun violence in Philadelphia, it was announced that Estelle Richman has been named its executive director.

Richman brings with her more than four decades of experience transforming government systems through creative and innovative public- private solutions.



Estelle Richman has been named the executive director of the Civic Coalition to Save Lives. Courtesy Photo.

In her latest role, she will direct the day-to-day activities of the newly-formed Coalition and serve as the key liaison between it and public sector partners.

“There is nothing more important than saving lives and I am honored to be part of this mission, which has the support of so many of Philadelphia’s great leaders. I look forward to working with the City and all of our partners to bend the curve on gun violence,” Richman said in reaction to her appointment.

Announced last month, the Civic Coalition to Save Lives was founded by the Philadelphia Foundation and William Penn Foundation in partnership with the Urban Affairs Coalition, the Chamber Commerce for Greater Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Equity Alliance to help catalyze a broad civic effort that will drive a focus on evidence- based strategies to reduce gun violence in Philadelphia.

Richman will now be tasked with utilizing her expertise to help establish, build, and implement long-term, sustainable efforts toward achieving that goal.

Among her immediate priorities will include working closely with the city to lead planning and implementation for the proposed Gun Violence Intervention Coordination Center, which is a centerpiece of the Coalition's effort to ensure a high level of collaboration between the city, service providers, and social service agencies.

Pedro Ramos, President & CEO of the Philadelphia Foundation, wrote in a statement that he "cannot think of a more dedicated and capable individual to lead the Coalition for ward."

"Estelle's experience, knowledge and understanding of the city, public health and social services make her uniquely qualified to begin this work and steer it in the direction to make lasting, positive change and impact in our communities," added Ramos.

Throughout her career, Richman has fortified herself as a dedicated leader in public service and a strong advocate for behavioral health. She's held a number of executive leadership roles at every level of government and has shown skills in developing, managing and coordinating internal and external relationships to facilitate and maximize goals and outcomes.

"Having spent the bulk of her career working in Philadelphia city government, Estelle and I have a history of working together to get things done," said Mayor Jim Kenney in a statement. "She is a true partner who listens, amplifies the voices of those most directly impacted by policies and decisions, and is dogged in her pursuit of finding common ground, taking action and creating change."

Previous roles for Richman include serving as Secretary of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development as senior advisor health and human services, as well as chief operating officer and acting deputy secretary at the agency.

She was also secretary of the now Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and made history as the first woman to hold the position of Managing Director for the City of Philadelphia, and the city's first Director of Social Services.