

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Voqal Announces 2018 Voqal Fellows**

**Longmont, Colorado, January 25, 2018** — Voqal recently accepted eight tech and social entrepreneurs focused on making a difference into the 2018 cohort of its Voqal Fellowship program, which provides the resources and mentoring needed to bring early-stage ideas focused on progressive and social change to life. This is the largest cohort of the Fellowship since its inception in 2012. Voqal Fellows will receive a \$30,000 stipend and are expected to complete their projects in six months.

“In this time of political uncertainty and attacks on the rights of many underrepresented populations, we are excited to support a cohort of real change-makers as they work to create a more socially equitable world through their innovation,” said Voqal Fund Program Office Leah Pryor-Lease.

Joining a growing legacy of Voqal Fellows making a difference in the world are the following members of the 2018 class:

#### **Alicia Nieves – Streetwide**

Nieves’ project, Streetwide allows allies and impacted communities to work together to deliver emotional and legal support to individuals and their loved ones impacted by immigration arrest and deportation. Before founding Streetwide, Nieves was a legal fellow with Justfix.nyc, a housing tech nonprofit in New York City where she helped low-income tenants use the Justfix web application to build affirmative legal cases against their neglectful and abusive landlords.

#### **Amber Royster – Where to Start**

Royster’s project Where to Start is focused on helping small nonprofits that, for systemic and practical reasons, rarely have the time, money or other capacities to effectively and efficiently communicate their brand, work and stories. Royster currently works as a digital/communications strategist who most recently built the digital program for Deb Haaland for Congress. Prior to this, she led New Mexico’s LGBTQ civil rights organization through campaigns for marriage equality, transgender student protections, and the statewide ban on conversion therapy, while also rebranding the organization, tripling its online reach, and more than doubling its annual revenue.

#### **Chris Vaeth – How to Help**

Vaeth’s project, How to Help works with the news cycle to connect people with ways to do something about the day’s big stories. Vaeth has also served on the team that opened and built the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, hosted The Resisters podcast and worked across the nonprofit sector for social change.

#### **Imara Jones – The Last Sip**

Jones’ project, The Last Sip is a weekly half-hour news program aimed at progressive Millennials of color, especially women and the LGBTQ community, focused on making national issues concrete for viewers by focusing on the people and organizations driving social and economic change at the grassroots level. An Emmy and Peabody Award winner, Jones is a genderqueer on-air news analyst, writer and host whose work focuses on the full-range of social justice and equity issues. She has been featured regularly in several leading outlets such as The Guardian, The Nation, MSNBC, CNBC, NPR, Mic and Colorlines.

**Jeremiah Smith – For the Record**

Smith's project, For the Record is a program designed to empower underserved students in Rosedale to tell the story of their community with a critical eye toward systems of oppression. Smith is the co-founder and executive director for the Rosedale Freedom Project. Working as an English teacher at the Rosedale High School and inspired by the work of the Sunflower County Freedom Project, he became convinced that, if given the right opportunities, students in Rosedale could compete with students from America's most prestigious schools.

**Micah White – Activist Graduate School**

White's project, Activist Graduate School is an online educational institution designed specifically for the needs of experienced activists who want to take their movement work to the next level. White is a lifelong social activist known for co-creating Occupy Wall Street while an editor of Adbusters magazine. A sought after global speaker on the future of activism, he has delivered numerous lectures at prestigious universities — including Princeton, Swarthmore, Middlebury and the University of Chicago — along with cultural festivals and private events in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Italy, Indonesia and the United States.

**Nick Guthman – Blue Future**

Guthman's project, Blue Future will strengthen progressive youth activism by creating a clearinghouse website, social media campaign and the infrastructure for a national coalition to coordinate, broaden and optimize the work of youth civic engagement organizations. He is a progressive political organizer based in Washington D.C. For the past five years, Guthman has worked on local and national electoral races, as well as issue advocacy campaigns surrounding racial justice, health care and tax fairness.

**Shira Frank – Maiden**

Frank's project, Maiden creates a more intelligent economy by diversifying the leaders, makers and culture of Blockchain Technology. She brings over 15 years of work in politics, social change, women's philanthropy and fundraising to her role as Co-Founder of Maiden. Frank spent seven years as a deputy director for J Street — the single-largest pro-Israel PAC in the US — working to transform the way Congress and the executive branch engage in the Middle East and to promote the creation of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**About Voqal**

Voqal is a national collaboration of EBS (Educational Broadband Service) licensees that work to advance social equity by creating an educated and informed public. Voqal provides grants and investments for organizations and individuals, affordable mobile internet and wireless spectrum advocacy. Our efforts center around using media and technology to increase access, community and knowledge.