

# SHANNON JONES

President & CEO

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**Groundwork**  
**OHIO**

In less than five years, Shannon Jones has transformed Groundwork Ohio into a highly effective and respected public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to championing early learning and healthy development strategies for Ohio's youngest children. She has cultivated a diverse team of thoughtful, experienced, and highly sought-after policy and tactical experts. This motivational leadership coupled with her unique knowledge of Ohio's political landscape and visionary coalition engagement has elevated Groundwork's statewide advocacy efforts into a national model for movement building and delivered on positive change for Ohio's most vulnerable young children and their families.

The results speak for themselves and are echoed by the many varied voices that Shannon's leadership inspires—regardless of personal attribute, professional association, or political affiliation. Through Shannon's relentless commitment to building key partnerships, mobilizing stakeholders, and communicating thoughtfully with core constituencies and the media to influence and educate policymakers, Groundwork is now the recognized leader in early childhood policy and advocacy in Ohio. Not only has Groundwork's success grown the footprint of child advocacy across the state to advance its own mission, but it has also ushered in new opportunities and built more capacity to support children and families.

Under Shannon's trusted service, Groundwork pioneered the Ohio Early Childhood Race and Rural Equity project by leading a thoughtful conversation across the state on equity. By evaluating child-serving systems and communicating about them through an equity lens, Groundwork utilized powerful storytelling, using disaggregated data as a critical lever, to influence early

childhood policy. This work continues to be shared with local communities, early childhood and health stakeholders, education professionals, business leaders, statewide policymakers, and the media.

Shannon's commitment to equitable outcomes for all children didn't end with this groundbreaking work. Rather, it inspired the courage to think more boldly about how to effectuate systems change to meet the needs of families and operationalize equity within the esteemed organization. Based upon research and much reflection by Shannon and her team, the Center for Family Voice was created to address the reality that families are too often not included in the creation of policies and practices that deeply impact their lives. The Center for Family Voice develops authentic, trusting relationships with families, respects and values their lived experiences, and empowers families to effectively use their own expert perspectives to drive change in policies and practices to improve the healthy development and success of their own children, families, and communities.

Another enterprising achievement of Shannon's leadership is the creation of the Vote for Ohio Kids Campaign, a unique alliance between Groundwork Ohio and the Ohio Children's Hospital Association in partnership with business, health care, and early education leaders as well as child advocates from across the state to ensure Ohio's policymakers prioritize children's early education and health. As a result of her successful efforts, Ohio is experiencing renewed interest in early childhood policies by its chief executive.

Prior to joining Groundwork Ohio, Shannon served in the Ohio General Assembly for a decade as a state representative and a

state senator, where she was chosen by her colleagues for key leadership posts in both chambers. She is the only woman in her party, and first in Ohio history, ever to achieve the distinction of election to the leadership teams in both chambers. Known as a leader who is willing to tackle the most difficult and complex issues, Shannon used her trusted influence to put kids at the top of the legislative agenda.

Shannon is one of Ohio's most distinguished child advocates. She continues to be invited to key decision-making tables and is steadfast in her efforts to broaden these tables to include more critical and diverse voices. Most recently she was appointed to the Governor's Eliminating Racial Disparities in Infant Mortality Task Force aimed at addressing Ohio's racial disparities in infant mortality and was named by the Dayton Business Journal as one of the most influential women in the region.

Shannon earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Cincinnati and teaches Health Policy at the University of Dayton. She currently serves as a Warren County Commissioner and as a board member for the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, the Warren County United Way, the Warren County Foundation, and the County Commissioners Association of Ohio. She also serves on the Human Services and Education Committee for the National Association of Counties. Shannon is a prestigious Rodel Fellow of the Aspen Global Leadership Institute, one of only 300 public servants nationally to have achieved that honor.

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