

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



AMERICAN
SOLAR
ENERGY SOCIETY

Nicole Maestas Olonovich President of the New Mexico Solar Energy Society (NMSEA)



Nicole Maestas Olonovich

A little bit about Nicole:

I live by the motto "do better, be better," with an emphasis on actionable change. I am the President of the New Mexico Solar Energy Association (NMSEA), Vice Chairwomen of the Green Amendments for the Generations, a disabled United States Air Force combat veteran, and mother who comes from a large, loving Hispanic family in New Mexico. I earned two master's degrees from New Mexico Highlands University, one in social work and the other in business, with a focus in government nonprofit leadership. I am a policy activist and community organizer who focuses primarily on environmental justice (EJ) at the heart of humanitarianism.

What has been your involvement with ASES?

In 2022, I was invited to my first NMSEA meeting where a discussion was being had about what the future of renewables should look like. I participated in the conversation from a vantage point of justice and equity for humanity. I was asked to join the NMSEA Board and that linked me to ASES for the first time.

What personal or professional accomplishments are you most proud of?

I am a mother of an 18-month-old girl. I never thought I would be a mother. And, quite frankly, I felt so disheartened at the plight of the climate for so long that I never really considered becoming a mother. However, working in the EJ community gave me hope. I got to see how a band of like-minded folks could positively impact Mother Earth, which made me comfortable taking on this new, and most important, role. I'm so proud of all the work I've been able to do with my baby by my side. I feel her literal weight alongside me during the environmental wins of the renewable and EJ policy.

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In what ways are you involved in renewable energy and sustainability?

I have done policy advocacy and grassroots organizing for over a decade. Outside of NMSEA and the Green Amendments for the Generations, I work with various progressive and environmental Caucuses, communities, and organizations working on policy creation & implementation from the municipal to state level. I am also the CEO of CSOLPOWER LLC, where we are striving to develop ethically sourced materials for long duration thermal energy storage and our company is currently participating in several of our states community solar projects; community solar is a piece of legislation I worked with Representative Patricia Roybal Caballero on to get passed in our state that gets sun 300+ days out of the year.

Professionally, I've become more focused on environmental justice as the common denominator for most of my human rights advocacy. As we say at the Green Amendment for the Generations, I fight for our right to clean air, water, soil, and a healthy environment for myself and future generations!

Fun question: What historical person would you like to have dinner with?

Harriet Tubman! I think every generation feels the heaviness of the weight of their world, and one of the most profound, resilient, and inspirational humans for me is Harriet. I would sit, listen, and learn about the power of a single person within a massive movement and the power of hope, tenacity, and teamwork.
