Raquel Hatter, Ed. D.
Managing Director, Human Services

Raquel Hatter, Ed. D., is managing director of the Human Services Program at The Kresge Foundation, which seeks to advance social and economic mobility with an applied racial equity lens driven by a two-generation, whole-family approach.

She has served families and communities for more than 30 years in leadership roles across the child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and human services systems.

Hatter’s service spans advancing public policy, organizational and person-centered systems change to forging partnership with families and communities to integrating trauma- and executive functioning-informed, family-centered, two-generation and strength-based practices into her work with individuals and families.

Prior to joining The Kresge Foundation, Hatter served as commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services where she identified ways to improve the outcomes for individuals and families across various support systems including child support, TANF, SNAP and vocational rehabilitation. This work included integrating a two-generation approach throughout the state with public and community-based organizations.

Earlier in her service, Hatter supported adults and children as an outreach worker and frontline practitioner providing on-demand support to families in crisis. She was the first black woman - and the youngest ever - to serve as CEO at Whaley Children’s Center in Flint, Mich.; and she was the first black CEO of Family and Children’s Service in Nashville, Tenn. In addition, she’s served as an adjunct instructor at the community college and graduate level in Michigan and Tennessee. She also worked with indigenous communities in the Northern Territory in Australia.

Hatter draws on her own personal lived experiences to inform how she approaches her work as a leader of and advocate for people striving to realize their version of the American dream. She is a Head Start graduate, received SNAP and childcare assistance, lived with her mom and maternal grandparents until she was 8 years old and was a student-parent during both her undergraduate and graduate studies. In her own words, Hatter says, “I know what it is to struggle, and I know what it is to struggle less.”

She has received numerous awards for her work including the 2016 American Public Human Services Association State Member Award for Transforming Human Services and the 2014 Spirit of Crazy Horse Award from Reclaiming Youth International for her service to children, youth and families.

Hatter earned a bachelor’s degree in clinical community psychology at the University of Michigan, a Master of Social Work degree at Eastern Michigan University as well as a Doctor of Education in children, youth and family studies from Nova Southeastern University.

A wife, mother and nana and a woman of faith, Raquel considers it an honor and a privilege to serve alongside her Kresge colleagues and partners to expand opportunity for all who live in American cities.