



Rachel Heiligman

Senior Program Manager of the Research and Development Initiative

Rachel Heiligman joined the Jim Joseph Foundation in January 2023 as the Senior Program Manager of the Research and Development Initiative. She oversees a broad investment portfolio seeding transformative research, experimentation, and developments to catalyze new possibilities for Jewish identity, expression and community building with an increasingly diverse and divergent North American Jewish population.

Rachel brings a cross-sector skill set to the Foundation built on management of public-sector resilience initiatives, entrepreneurial non-profit leadership, and community-organizing and advocacy. She has led major infrastructure projects including project managing a rails-to-trail urban greenway development and the redevelopment of post-industrial riverfront to a linear parkway – both in the city of New Orleans post-Katrina. Rachel also served as the first Executive Director of RIDE New Orleans, the first transportation equity non-profit think tank in New Orleans - a project that has resulted in increased transit access and connectivity across the region. Rachel is a turophile and helmed a multi-faceted artisanal cheese company and the creation and production of the country's largest cheese festival.

Rachel earned a Master of City Planning (MCP) degree from the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania. She holds a BA from Whittier College where she studied Sociology and Spanish. She now lives with her husband and two children in New Orleans, Louisiana where she serves as Treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Alliance for Affordable Energy, whose mission is to safeguard Louisiana's future by protecting consumers' right to an equitable, affordable and environmentally responsible energy system.