



## **Yolanda Arias, Managing Attorney, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles**

Yolanda Arias is the Managing Attorney (MA) of the Economic Stability Work Group and East Office at the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA). As MA of the Economic Stability Workgroup, Yolanda oversees LAFLA's work in government benefits, employment law, student debt relief and, until recently, re-entry legal services. She has worked at LAFLA since 1988. Yolanda worked extensively on a landmark Title VI Civil Rights complaint filed with HHS against LA County's welfare agency alleging the agency failed to adequately serve limited English proficient (LEP) individuals in both the cash aid and welfare-to-work programs. Along with other LAFLA attorneys, Yolanda is currently working on language access issues involving the state Employment Development Department.

In 1992, as a new attorney, Yolanda helped LAFLA, along with the American Civil Liberties Union and Western Center on Law and Poverty, gather declarations and evidence necessary to file a class action lawsuit (pre-restriction era) alleging that the Bush Administration had illegally denied emergency food stamps to victims of the Los Angeles Uprising. The federal government did not consider the devastation that occurred as a result of the unrest the type of disaster that qualified for emergency aid, like hurricanes or earthquakes.

Yolanda has also litigated several impact cases of statewide importance including: *Rosales v. Thompson* (litigation that expanded eligibility for children in foster care); and *Harris, et al. v. County of Los Angeles* (access to health care for indigents). She has also led policy advocacy in Los Angeles on welfare-to-work issues and language access issues. Yolanda previously worked on issues related to the Immigration Reform and Control Act at the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). Yolanda received her law degree from the University of California at Los Angeles and her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Southern California. Yolanda currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Economic Roundtable.