

Santina Contreras

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2021 - **University of Southern California** – Los Angeles, CA
Assistant Professor, Department of Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis
Faculty Affiliate, Equity Research Institute
- 2025 - **Brookings Institution** – Washington, D.C.
Nonresident Fellow, Center for Community Uplift
- 2018 - 2021 **The Ohio State University** – Columbus, OH
Assistant Professor, City and Regional Planning, Knowlton School of Architecture
Faculty Affiliate, Sustainability Institute
Faculty Affiliate, Center for Latin American Studies
- 2017 - 2018 **University of Colorado Boulder** – Boulder, CO
Postdoctoral Research Associate, Program in Environmental Design
Researcher-in-Residence, Natural Hazards Center

EDUCATION

- 2016 **Ph.D. Planning, Policy, and Design**
University of California, Irvine
- 2008 **M.S. Civil and Environmental Engineering**
University of California, Berkeley
- 2007 **B.S. Structural Engineering**
University of California, San Diego

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Community Engagement: Participatory Planning & Evaluation; Power Dynamics; Environmental Justice
Natural Hazards & Disasters: Recovery & Response; Community Resilience; Critical Resilience Studies
Knowledge Production: Informal Networks; Community Knowledge Sharing; Community-based Research

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- 2026 **Contreras, S., Ortiz, Z.,*** Maysonet, T., Gilliam, R., Dean, M., Babboni, M., & Vega, K. Building urban resilience with “just” trees: addressing community interests within urban forestry planning in South Los Angeles. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2025.2604127>
- 2026 **Contreras, S., Witkowski, K., Perodin, J.,*** Remington, C., Headley, A., & Ganapati, E. First Responder Ladder of Community Engagement: Understanding Community Facing Activities

* Indicates coauthor was a graduate student advisee at the time of publication.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 48(2), 662-684.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2024.2410277>

- 2025 Headley, A., Witkowski, K., Remington, C., Ganapati, E., & **Contreras, S.** Trauma-Informed Organizational Climate and its Impact on Burnout in First Response Agencies during COVID-19. *Public Administration Review*, 85(1), 144-164. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13764>
- 2024 Baker, J., Crowley, H., Wald, D., Rathje, E., Au, S.-K., Bradley, B., Burton, H., Cabas, A., Cattari, S., Cauzzi, C., Cavalieri, F., **Contreras, S.**, Costa, R., Eguchi, R., Lallemand, D., Lignos, D., Maurer, B., Molina Hutt, C., Sextos, A., Seyhan, E., Sucuoğlu, H., Tacioglu, E., Silva, V., & Thompson, E. Sharing data and code facilitates reproducible and impactful research. *Earthquake Spectra*, 40:2210-2218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/87552930241259397>
- 2024 Witkowski, K., **Contreras, S.**, Remington, C., Headley, A., & Ganapati, E. Organizational Resilience in First-Response Agencies: Visual Responses from First Responders during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 107, 104467. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2024.104467>
- 2024 Witkowski, K., Lofaro, R., Headley, A., **Contreras, S.**, Remington, C., & Ganapati, E. Understanding Problematic Substance Use Among First Responders During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Survey of Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS Workers in the United States. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 123, 1044261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2023.104261>
- 2023 Seyedrezaei, M., * Becerik-Gerber, B., Awada, M., **Contreras, S.**, & Boeing, G. Equity in the Built Environment: A Systematic Review. *Building and Environment*, 245, 110827. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2023.110827>
- 2023 Remington, C., Witkowski, K., Ganapati, E., Headley, A., & **Contreras, S.** First Responders and the COVID-19 Pandemic: How Organizational Strategies Can Promote Workforce Retention. *American Review of Public Administration*, 54(1), 33-56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02750740231192968>
- 2023 Cabas, A., Lorenzo-Velazquez, C., Abayo, N., Ji, C., Ramirez, J., Garcia, F., Perodin, J., * Hwang, Y., Dashti, S., Ganapati, N., Nicolas, S., Whitwirth, M., Guerrier, K., Saint Fleur, N., **Contreras, S.**, Lagesse, R., Marcelin, L., & Remington, C. Intersectional Impacts of the 2021 Mw 7.2 Nippes, Haiti Earthquake from Geotechnical and Social Perspectives. *Bulletin of the Seismological Society of America*, 113(1), 73-98. <https://doi.org/10.1785/0120220118>
- 2023 Headley, A., Remington, C., Witkowski, K., **Contreras, S.**, & Ganapati, E. The Impact of COVID-19 on First Responders in the United States. *International Journal of Emergency Services*, 12(2), 243-251. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJES-12-2022-0071>
- 2023 Niles, S., * Roudbari, S., **Contreras, S.** Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Changing Colonial Racial Hierarchies in International Development. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 10(2), 249-263. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23326492231214450>
- 2022 **Contreras, S.**, & Niles, S. * Building Resilience through Informal Networks and Community Knowledge Sharing: Post-disaster Health Service Delivery after Hurricane Maria. *Environmental Hazards*, 21(5), 433-452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17477891.2022.2049191>

- 2022 **Contreras, S., & Roudbari, S.** Who's learning from whom? Grassroots International NGOs learning from communities in development projects. *Development in Practice*, 32(5), 569-582. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2021.1937554>
- 2020 Niles, S.,* Roudbari, S., & **Contreras, S.** Integrating Social Justice and Political Engagement into Engineering. *International Journal of Engineering, Social Justice, and Peace*, 7(1), 52-64. <https://doi.org/10.24908/ijesjp.v7i1.13568>
- 2020 Niles, S.,* **Contreras, S.**, Roudbari, S., Kaminsky, J., & Harrison, J. Resisting and Assisting Engagement with Public Welfare in Engineering Education. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 109(3), 491-507. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jee.20323>
- 2020 Goodrich, K., Sanders, B., Basolo, V., Feldman, D., Matthew, R., Schubert, J., Luke, A., Eguiarte, A., Boudreau, D., Serrano, K., Reyes, A., **Contreras, S.**, Houston, D., Cheung, W., AghaKouchak, A., & Sanders, B. Addressing Pluvial Flash Flooding through Community-Based Collaborative Research in Tijuana, Mexico. *Water*, 12(5), 1257. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w12051257>
- 2020 Sanders, B., Schubert, J., Goodrich, K., Houston, D., Feldman, D., Basolo, V., Luke, A., Boudreau, D., Karlin, B., Cheung, W., **Contreras, S.**, Reyes, A., Eguiarte, A., Serrano, K., Allaire, M., Moftakhari, H., AghaKouchak, A., & Matthew, R. Collaborative Modeling with Fine Resolution Data Enhances Flood Awareness, Minimizes Differences in Flood Perception, and Produces Actionable Flood Maps. *Earth's Future*, 7, e2019EF001391. <https://doi.org/10.1029/2019EF001391>
- 2020 **Contreras, S.**, Niles, S.,* Roudbari, S., Harrison, J., & Kaminsky, J. Bridging the Praxis of Hazards and Development with Resilience: A Case Study of an Engineering Education Program. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 42, 101347. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2019.101347>
- 2019 **Contreras, S.** Using Arnstein's Ladder as an Evaluative Framework for the Assessment of Participatory Work in Post-disaster Haiti. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 85(3), 219-235. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1618728>
- 2017 Houston, D., Cheung, W., Basolo, V., Feldman, D., Matthew, R., Sanders, B., Karlin, B., Schubert, J., Goodrich, K., **Contreras, S.**, & Luke, A. The Influence of Hazard Maps and Trust of Flood Controls on Coastal Flood Spatial Awareness and Risk Perception. *Environment and Behavior*, 51(4), 347-375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916517748711>
- 2016 Feldman, D., **Contreras, S.**, Karlin, B., Basolo, V., Matthew, R., Sanders, B., Houston, D., Cheung, W., Goodrich, K., Reyes, A., Serrano, K., Schubert, J., & Luke, A. Communicating Flood Risk: Looking Back and Forward at Traditional and Social Media Outlets. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 15, 43-51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2015.12.004>
- 2016 Cheung, W., Houston, D., Schubert, J., Basolo, V., Feldman, D., Matthew, R., Sanders, B., Karlin, B., Goodrich, K., **Contreras, S.**, & Luke, A. Integrating Resident Digital Sketch Maps with Expert Knowledge to Assess Spatial Knowledge of Flood Risk: A Case Study of Participatory Mapping in Newport Beach, California. *Applied Geography*, 74, 56-64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2016.07.006>
- Book Chapters**
- 2025 **Contreras, S.**, Lorenzo Pérez, M.,* & Jaramillo Nieves, L. "Decolonizing Resilience: Learning from Unexplored Stories and Perspectives Surrounding Hazard and Disaster Risks in Puerto

Rico.” In: *Decolonizing Planning: Power and Knowledge in the Informal City*, edited by B. Sletto, T. Winkler and E. Huq. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar.
<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035319978>

Technical Reports

- 2026 **Contreras, S.**, Siegel, M., * Ton, S., * Monder, C., Dean, M. Aligning Infrastructure Investments with Impact: A Scorecard for Multi-Benefit, Community-Focused Infrastructure in Los Angeles County. USC Dornsife Public Exchange. Available at: [public-exchange.org/usc/project/infrastructure](https://publicexchange.org/usc/project/infrastructure)
- 2025 **Contreras, S.**, Heschmeyer, D., * Siegel, M., * Dean, M., Monder, C., Faustinos, B., Gardner, M. Building Better Together: Applying a Multi-Benefit Framework to LA County Infrastructure Projects. USC Dornsife Public Exchange. Available at: <https://publicexchange.usc.edu/la-infrastructure/>
- 2024 **Contreras, S.**, Heschmeyer, D., * Dean, M., Monder, C., Faustinos, B., Gardner, M., & Siegel, M. * Building for Impact: A Framework for Evaluating Multi-Benefit and Community-Engaged Infrastructure Projects Under Existing Policy in Los Angeles County. USC Dornsife Public Exchange. Available at: <https://publicexchange.usc.edu/la-infrastructure/>
- 2024 **Contreras, S.**, Ortiz, Z., * Dean, M., Babboni, M., Vega, K., Maysonet, T., & Gilliam, R. Rooted Connections: Understanding South Los Angeles Community Leaders' Relationship to the Urban Forest. USC Dornsife Public Exchange. Available at: <https://publicexchange.usc.edu/south-la-trees/>
- 2024 Burke, R., **Contreras, S.**, Anderson, A., * Yeager, A., & Borgatti J. How Rural Contexts Shape Disaster Recovery: Children and Families After the 2020 Slater Fire. *Natural Hazards Center Public Health Disaster Research Report Series*. Boulder, CO: Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder. Available at: <https://hazards.colorado.edu/public-health-disaster-research/how-rural-contexts-shape-disaster-recovery>
- 2023 Chandrasekhar, D., Finn, D., **Contreras, S.**, Isaba, T. * Land Use Based Wildfire Adaptations in Unincorporated Communities. *Natural Hazards Center Quick Response Grant Report Series*, 361. Boulder, CO: Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder. Available at: <https://hazards.colorado.edu/quick-response-report/land-use-adaptations-to-wildfire-in-unincorporated-communities-in-colorado>
- 2023 Bales, R., McKuin, B., Harris, J., Raj, R., **Contreras, S.**, Craig, R., Wooley, D., Feldman, D., Forrest, K., Gim, C., Tarroja, B., Owen, D., Dean, M., Gallai, D., Ignon, L., Messer, D., Monder, C., Wald, R., & Weber, K. California Solar Canal Initiative. Workshop Report: Roadmap to Implementation. USC Dornsife Public Exchange.
- 2022 Lorenzo Pérez, M., * & **Contreras, S.** Understanding the Impacts of Managed Retreat and Resettlement on Informal Communities. *Natural Hazards Center Mitigation Matters Grant Report Series*, 8. Boulder, CO: Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder. Available at: <https://hazards.colorado.edu/mitigation-matters-report/understanding-the-impacts-of-managed-retreat-and-resettlement-on-informal-communities>
- 2022 Dashti, S., Ganapati, E., Abayo, N., Cabas, A., Calderon, J., **Contreras, S.**, Dessable, J., Garcia, E., Guerrier, K., Hwang, Y., Jeannot, T., Ji, C., Lagesse, R., Logiste, M., Lorenzo-Velazquez, C., Nicolas, S., Remington, C., Perodin, J., * Saint Fleur, N., Shirro, M., Vissiere, S., & Whitworth, M. Reconnaissance Following the August 14, 2021 Haiti Earthquake: Perspectives from Geotechnical Engineering and Social/Political Sciences. Geotechnical

Extreme Reconnaissance (GEER) Report No. 073. Available at:
<https://doi.org/10.18118/G60090>

- 2021 Headley, A., Remington, C., Witkowski, K., **Contreras, S.**, & Ganapati, E. Reprioritizing Responsibilities: Examining How Colliding Epidemics Impact First Responders. Drug Enforcement and Policy Center, Moritz College of Law, Ohio State University. Available at: https://moritzlaw.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2021-12/Reprioritizing%20Responsibilities_Andrea%20Headly%20et%20all_exec-summary.pdf
- 2019 Niles, S.,* & **Contreras, S.** Social Vulnerability and the Role of Puerto Rico's Healthcare Workers after Hurricane Maria. *Natural Hazards Center Quick Response Grant Report Series*, 288. Boulder, CO: Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado Boulder. Available at: <https://hazards.colorado.edu/quick-response-report/social-vulnerability-and-the-role-of-puerto-ricos-healthcare-workers-after-hurricane-maria>

Other Publications

- 2025 Burke, R., & **Contreras, S.** Schools and communities can help children bounce back after distressing disasters like the LA wildfires. *The Conversation*.
<https://doi.org/10.64628/AAL.q4vtddqvr>
- 2019 **Contreras, S.**, Campbell, J., Tang, X., & Duke, T. Regenerative Cultures and Resilient Communities (RCx2). Community Engagement Conference: Partnering for a Resilient and Sustainable Future. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University. Available at: <https://kb.osu.edu/items/d807d7c6-56ac-49c4-84a9-4b04a2189caa>
- 2019 Niles, S.,* & **Contreras, S.** Capitalism, Colonialism, Crisis and Care: The Response of Health Care Workers after Hurricane Maria. 9th International i-Rec (information and research for reconstruction) Conference. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida. Available at: http://www.grif.umontreal.ca/i-rec/i-Rec2019/i-Rec-2019_program.pdf

GRANTS & CONTRACTS

External Grants

- 2025-2026 Co-PI. Ghosh, S., **Contreras, S.**, Johnson, L. Bridging the Data Gap: Capturing Ephemeral Data to Enhance Wildfire Resilience and Recovery after the 2025 Devastating Los Angeles Fires. National Science Foundation Rapid Response Research (NSF RAPID), March 2025-March 2026. (\$79,659)
- 2025-2025 PI. **Contreras, S.** Infrastructure Justice for LA Coalition Scorecard Development: Evaluating Multi-Benefit Infrastructure Projects (Phase 2). Funded by Infrastructure Justice for LA Coalition, LA Waterkeeper, and Accelerate Resilience Los Angeles (ARLA), with support from USC Dornsife Public Exchange, January 2025 – December 2025. (\$50,000)
- 2025-2025 Co-PI. Barajas, J., Cannon, C., & **Contreras, S.** Community Responsive Approaches to Infrastructure Risk and Benefit. Center for Emissions Reduction, Resiliency, and Climate Equity Transportation (CERRCET), January 2025 – December 2025 (\$41,311)
- 2024-2026 Co-PI. Lowe, J., Solitare, L., Carney, J., Chin, A., **Contreras, S.**, Frisch, M., Greenlee, A., Hawkins, V., Hendrickson, K., Jacobs, Mueller, E., O'Dell, B., Park, S. B., Ray, A., Shadravan, B., Solis, M., Way, H., & Yin, J. Center of Excellence for Housing & Community Development Policy Research. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, September 2024 – April 2026. (\$142,000)

- 2024-2024 PI. **Contreras, S.** Infrastructure Justice for LA Coalition Scorecard Development: Evaluating Multi-Benefit Infrastructure Projects (Phase 1). Funded by Infrastructure Justice for LA Coalition, LA Waterkeeper, and Accelerate Resilience Los Angeles (ARLA), with support from USC Dornsife Public Exchange, March 2024 – December 2024. (\$30,000)
- 2023-2024 Co-PI. Burke, R., & **Contreras, S.** Factors Associated with Recovery and Resilience After a Wildfire: Rural Families’ Experiences. Public Health Disaster Research Award Supported by the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder with the Support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Science Foundation, January 2024 – June 2024. (\$50,000)
- 2023-2024 PI. **Contreras, S.** USC/South LA Tree Coalition: Understanding South Los Angeles Community Leaders' Relationship to the Urban Forest. Funded by South LA Tree Coalition and the Windward Foundation Environmental Justice Data Fund, with support from USC Dornsife Public Exchange, August 2023 – July 2024. (\$30,000)
- 2023-2023 Co-PI. Chandrasekhar, D., Finn, D., **Contreras, S.**, & Isaba, T. * Land Use Based Wildfire Adaptations in Unincorporated Communities. Quick Response Research Award Supported by the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder with the support of the National Science Foundation, March 2023 – August 2023. (\$4,000)
- 2020-2021 Co-PI. Lorenzo Pérez, M., * & **Contreras, S.** Understanding the Impacts of Managed Retreat and Resettlement on Informal Communities in Puerto Rico. Mitigation Matters Research Award Supported by the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder with the support of the National Science Foundation, May 2020 – August 2021. (\$2,500)
- 2018-2018 Co-PI. Niles, S., * & **Contreras, S.** Social Vulnerability and Health Care Workers’ Response after Hurricane Maria. Quick Response Research Award Supported by the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder with the support of the National Science Foundation, May 2018 – August 2018. (\$2,000)

Internal Grants

- 2024-2025 Co-PI. Tysinger, B., **Contreras, S.**, Ioannou, P., McConnell, R., Rose, A., Boarnet, M., Eckel, S., and Garcia, E. Alleviating health inequities from air pollution in the Gateway Cities Region: An evidence-based, community-engaged and interdisciplinary approach. USC Office of Research and Innovation (OORI) President’s Sustainability Initiative Large Program Award, August 2024 – June 2025. (\$249,992)
- 2023-2024 Co-PI. Bales, R., McKuin, B., Harris, J., Raj, R., **Contreras, S.**, Craig, R., Wooley, D., Feldman, D., Forrest, K., Gim, C., Tarroja, B., Owen, D., Dean, M., Gallai, D., Ignon, L., Messer, D., Monder, C., Wald, R., & Weber, K. California Solar Canal Initiative Scoping Workshop. USC Dornsife Public Exchange, August 2023 – January 2024. (\$3,000)
- 2020-2021 Co-PI. Hull, N., Campbell, J., **Contreras, S.** Hamilton, M., Patterson, C., & Waugh-Quasebarth, J. Systemic Interactions between Individuals and Drinking Water Quality in Appalachia. Sustainability Institute Seed Grant. Ohio State University, May 2020 – June 2021. (\$25,000)
- 2020-2021 Co-PI. Headley, A., **Contreras, S.**, Ganapati, E., Remington, C., & Witkowski, K. COVID-19 and the Reprioritization of Responsibilities: Examining How Colliding Disasters Impact First Responders. Drug Enforcement and Policy Center Research Grant. Ohio State University, May 2020 – June 2021. (\$15,000)

INVITED TALKS

- 2025 Invited Panel, with Allison Agsten, Genevieve Giuliano, and Gale Sinatra, moderated by Monica Dean. Recovering Together: Addressing Wildfire Challenges through Collaboration. University of Southern California Wildfire Summit. Los Angeles, California. May 21.
- 2025 Invited Panel, with Manuel Pastor and Juan De Lara, moderated by Allison Agsten. Exploring climate justice and racial equity in California. Los Angeles Times Festival of Books. Los Angeles, California. Apr 26.
- 2025 Invited Panel, with Los Angeles' Urban Fires: Understanding background, impacts, and research needs. United States Department of Agriculture, Pacific Southwest Research Station. Los Angeles, California, Apr 17.
- 2025 Invited Panel, with Richard Green, Clare De Briere, Lewis Horne, and Scott Laurie. Navigating Los Angeles' Future, Post Wildfires. USC Lusk Center for Real Estate and Restructured News. Los Angeles, California. Apr 15.
- 2025 Invited Panel, with Theo Henderson, Josh Lopez-Reyes, Alyx Liu. A Nexus of Crises: SELAH Neighborhood Homeless Coalition Volunteer Summit. Los Angeles, California. Mar 30.
- 2025 Invited Participant. California Solar Canal (CSCI) Summit. California Natural Resource Agency. Sacramento, California. Mar 24.
- 2025 Invited Panel, with Eric Burnstein, Ming Hu, and Jesse Keenan; moderated by Marccus Hendricks. Interdisciplinary Dialogue Series, Violence, Conflict, and Space: Hope and Peacebuilding Contributions from the Design Disciplines. School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. University of Maryland, College Park. Online. Mar 13.
- 2025 Invited Panel, with Christopher Boone, Richard Green, William Deverell; moderated by Sarah Pilla. Reconstruction Revival: How to Rebuild L.A. Price Presents Webinar Online. Jan 21.
- 2024 Invited Lecture. Building for Impact: A Framework for Evaluating Multi-Benefit and Community-Engaged Infrastructure Projects Under Existing Policy in Los Angeles County. Los Angeles Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability Network Meeting. Online. Dec 12.
- 2024 Invited Participant. USC and Infrastructure Justice for Los Angeles Collaborative Project. Public Exchange Snowball. Los Angeles, California. Dec 10.
- 2024 Invited Lecture. Building for Impact: A Framework for Evaluating Multi-Benefit and Community-Engaged Infrastructure Projects Under Existing Policy in Los Angeles County. Community-Powered Infrastructure Justice: A Multi-Benefit Infrastructure Project Showcase. Los Angeles, California. Nov 21.
- 2023 Invited Lecture. Understanding Planning Approaches towards Working with Communities surrounding Hazards and Disasters. Sustainable Global Communities Guest Lecture. University of Virginia. Online. Nov 2.
- 2023 Invited Lecture. Building Resilience through Community Practices: Exploring Community-led Efforts to Address Gaps in Relocation and Resettlement Programs. Kuhlman Lecture Series. University of Oklahoma. Norman, Oklahoma. Feb 23.

- 2022 Invited Lecture. Building Resilience through Community Practices. Public Health Disaster Management and Response. Keck School of Medicine. University of Southern California. Online. Oct 19.
- 2022 Invited Panel, with Jola Ajibade, Gabrielle Crowe, and Effie Turnbull Sanders; chaired by Phyllis Grifman. Environmental Justice, Disadvantaged Communities, and Disproportionate Impacts: Identifying What's Missing in Research. People on the Move in a Changing Climate (PEMOCC): Southwest Workshop. USC Sea Grant. Online. Sep 28.
- 2022 Invited Lecture. Understanding the Impacts of Managed Retreat and Resettlement on Informal Communities. Puerto Rico Resiliency Lab. University of Utah. Online. May 17.
- 2022 Invited Panel, with Joaquin Camacho, Candace Katungi, and Nancy Ronguillo; chaired by Tom Brown. McNair 150. University of California, San Diego. La Jolla, California. Apr 23.
- 2022 Invited Lecture. Building Resilience through Community-led Practices. Resilient Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RISE IRT) Seminar Series. University of Colorado Boulder. Online. Apr 4.
- 2022 Invited Lecture. The Production of Environmental Risks and Vulnerabilities in Latin America. Center for Latin American Studies. Ohio State University. Online. Mar 15.
- 2021 Invited Lecture. An Interdisciplinary Approach towards Building Resilience to Environmental Hazards. Social Justice Seminar, Civil and Environmental Engineering. University of California, Irvine. Online. Nov 19.
- 2021 Invited Lecture. Examining Latin America Through Nature and the Environment. Center for Latin American Studies. Ohio State University. Online. Nov 16.
- 2021 Invited Panel, with M. Martinez. Inclusion in the Environmental Movement. Sustainability Institute. Ohio State University. Online. Sep 30.
- 2021 Invited Lecture. Planning with Vulnerable Communities for Environmental Hazards. USG's Environmental Justice Lecture Series. Ohio State University. Online. Apr 5.
- 2020 Invited Panel, with Barbara Charry, Daniel Horton, and John Ikerd. Planning for a Resilient Future: Climate Action Workshop. Midwest Climate Summit. Washington University in St. Louis. Online. Nov 6.
- 2020 Invited Lecture. NGOs and Community Engagement: Learning from the Recovery work of Nongovernmental Organizations in Post-Disaster Haiti. Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning Fall 2020 Lecture Series. Texas A&M University. Online. Sep 21.
- 2019 Invited Panel, with Roberto Falanga, Aujean Lee, and Ana Perić, Utilizing Arnstein's Ladder as an Evaluative Framework for the Assessment of Participatory Work in Post-disaster Haiti. Association of European Schools of Planning Annual Congress. Venice, Italy. Jul 11.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Plenary Addresses

- 2023 Learning from Community Approaches towards Building Resilience to Risks in Puerto Rico. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Plenary Address. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 12-13.

Invited Panelist

- 2025 Emerging insights into post-disaster community relocation: from theory to implementation. Panelist with Rob Olshansky, Kanako Iuchi, and Omur Kuru; chaired by Divya Chandrasekhar. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Minneapolis, MN. Oct 23-25.
- 2025 Home-Grown Resilience: Local Solutions for Disaster Management. Panelist with Thomas Beveridge, Manann Donoghoe, and Sayma Khajehei, chaired by Jennifer Horney. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. Broomfield, Colorado. July 13-16.
- 2025 Reducing Risk and Saving Lives: The Mitigation Matters Research Award Program. Panelist with Noah Bezanson, Sayma Khajehei, and Farinaz Motlagh; chaired by Jennifer Tobin. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. Broomfield, Colorado. July 13-16.
- 2024 Closing Socioeconomic Gaps in Planning Education and Research. Panelist with Ivis Garcia, Ana Paula Pimentel Walker, and Deden Rukmana; chaired by Tisha Holmes. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Seattle, Washington. Nov 7-9.
- 2023 Decolonizing Disasters: Recentering Local Power for Resilience. Panelist with Susanna Hoffman, Lorna Jaramillo-Nieves, Laura Myers, and Richard Robertson; chaired by Robin Soler. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. Broomfield, Colorado. July 9-12.
- 2022 The Doctoral Experience: Lessons from Early Career Faculty. Panelist with Kareem Usher; chaired by Patricia De Toledo Basile. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Toronto, Canada. Nov 3-5.
- 2019 Mentoring from the Margins: Cultivating a Culture of Inclusion for Faculty and Students of Color, Women, LGBTQIA, and the Global South in Planning. Panelist with Clara Irazabal-Zurita, Katherine Lieberknecht, Tonya Sanders, and Bish Sanyal; chaired by Willow Lung-Amam and Emel Ganapati. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Greenville, South Carolina. Oct 24-27.
- 2019 How Planning Leadership Contributes to Sustainability through University-Based Grand Challenges. Panelist with Katherine Lieberknecht, Michael Oden, Steven Richter, and David Wachsmuth; chaired by Patrick Bixler. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Greenville, South Carolina. Oct 24-27.
- 2019 Regenerative Cultures and Resilient Communities (RCx2). Panelist with Joseph Campbell, Xiaofeng Tang, and Tony Duke. Ohio Campus Compact Annual Meeting: Campus, Community, and Student Connections from the Inside Out. Columbus, Ohio. Aug 4-5.
- 2018 Towards a More Equitable Recovery and Reconstruction for Post-Hurricane Maria Puerto Rico. Panelist with Angeliz Encarnacion, Deepak Lamba-Nieves, Luis Santiago, and William Siembieda; chaired by Clara Irazabal. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Buffalo, New York. Oct 25-28.

Sessions Organized

- 2025 CONVERGE-ing in real-time surrounding disaster events. Panel organized with Jennifer Lawrence. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 16-17.

- 2024 Rethinking Resilience: Designing Disaster-Aware Communities. Panel with Maria Dillard, Sarah Konradi, Paul Kovacs, and Joseph Kunkel. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 14-17.
- 2020 Becoming more Purposeful: How can Community-Engaged Studios and Teaching Increase their Impacts? Panel with Manish Chalana, Clara Irazabal, Vinit Mukhija, and Bjørn Sletto; organized with Danielle Rivera. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Online. Nov 5-8.

Conference Papers Presented

- 2025 **Contreras, S.**, Ortiz, Z., Maysonet, T., Gilliam, R., Babboni, M., Vega, K., & Dean, M. Building Urban Resilience with JUST-Trees: Addressing Community Interests in Urban Forestry Planning. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Minneapolis, MN. Oct 23-25.
- 2024 **Contreras, S.** Planning for Multi-Benefit Infrastructure & Equitable Community Engagement. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Seattle, Washington. Nov 7-9.
- 2024 Isaba, T.,* Chandrasekhar, D., Bhandari, S., Loquellano, A., Rumore, D, Finn. D., Bartholomew, K., Ganapati, N., & **Contreras, S.** Land Use Based Wildfire Planning for Unincorporated Communities in the Western United States. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 17-18.
- 2024 Burke, R., **Contreras, S.**, & Anderson, A.* Factors Associated with Recovery and Resilience After a Wildfire: Rural Families' Experiences. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 17-18.
- 2024 **Contreras, S.**, Witkowski, K., Perodin, J.,* Remington, C., Headley, A., & Ganapati, E. Understanding Community Facing Activities of First Responders Surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 17-18.
- 2024 Witkowski, K., **Contreras, S.**, Remington, C., Headley, A., & Ganapati, E. Organizational Resilience in First-Response Agencies: Visual Responses from First Responders during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 17-18.
- 2024 **Contreras, S.**, Witkowski, K., Perodin, J.,* Remington, C., Headley, A., & Ganapati, E. First Responder Ladder of Community Engagement: Understanding Community Facing Activities During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. New York, New York. April 24-27.
- 2023 **Contreras, S.** Planning for Communities in Multi-hazard Risk Environments. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Chicago, Illinois. Oct 19-21.
- 2023 Isaba, T.,* Chandrasekhar, D., Finn, D., & **Contreras, S.** Land Use Based Adaptation Against Emerging Wildfires. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 12-13.

- 2023 **Contreras, S.,** & Lorenzo Pérez, M.* Exploring the gaps in formal resilience building approaches through an assessment of community-led practices in Puerto Rico. Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. Nashville, Tennessee. April 26-29.
- 2023 Witkowski, K., **Contreras, S.,** Remington, C., Headley, A., & Ganapati, E. Re-prioritizing Organizational Resilience: Visual Responses from First Responders on the COVID-19 Pandemic. American Society for Public Administration. Online. Mar 20-24.
- 2022 **Contreras, S.,** & Lorenzo Pérez, M.* Informal Coping and Adaptive Practices: Exploring Community-led Efforts to Address Gaps in Relocation and Resettlement Programs. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Toronto, Canada. Nov 3-5.
- 2022 Headley, A., Ganapati, E., Remington, C., **Contreras, S.,** & Witkowski, K. Risk and Resilience on the Front Lines: Organizational Mitigation and the Impact of COVID-19 on First Responders. Annual Conference of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. Austin, Texas. March 27-29.
- 2022 **Contreras, S.,** Headley, A., Ganapati, E., Remington, C., & Witkowski, K. Understanding the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Community Engagement Practices of First Responders. Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. Washington, DC. Apr 12-14.
- 2021 **Contreras, S.,** & Lorenzo Pérez, M.* Moving to “safety”: An exploration of the impacts of risk and safety framing on the relocation of informal communities in Puerto Rico. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Online. Oct 21-23.
- 2021 Ma, D., * Hull., N., Hamilton, M., **Contreras, S.,** Campbell, J., Waugh-Quasebarth, J., Patterson, C., & Shahin, L.* Systematic Interactions between Individuals and Drinking Water Quality in Appalachia. Appalachian Translation Research Network Summit. Online. Sep 29.
- 2021 **Contreras, S.,** & Lorenzo Pérez, M.* Understanding decision-making surrounding hazard motivated relocation of informal communities in Puerto Rico. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Online. Jul 14-15.
- 2021 Ganapati, N., Remington, C., **Contreras, S.,** Witkowski, K., & Headley, A. Mitigating the Impact of Concurrent Crises on Frontline Workers. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Online. Jul 14-15.
- 2021 Lorenzo Pérez, M.,* & **Contreras, S.** Understanding decision-making surrounding hazard motivated relocation of informal communities in Puerto Rico. At What Point Managed Retreat? Resilience, Relocation, and Climate Justice. The Earth Institute. Columbia University. Online. Jun 22-25.
- 2021 Headley, A., Ganapati, N., Remington, C., Witkowski, K., & **Contreras, S.** The Gendered Impacts of Organizational Support on Burnout among First Responders. Public Management Research Conference. Online. Jun 23-26.
- 2020 **Contreras, S.,** & Roudbari, S. Who’s Learning from Whom: Small Organizations Learning from Communities in International Development. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Online. Nov 5-8.
- 2019 **Contreras, S.** Post-disaster Housing Reconstruction after the Mexico City Earthquake: Learning from the language and communication surrounding the participatory work of NGOs.

- Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Greenville, South Carolina. Oct 24-27.
- 2019 **Contreras, S.** Evaluating the Participatory Work of Nongovernmental Organizations in Post-Disaster Haiti. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 17-18.
- 2019 Niles, S., * Roudbari, S., **Contreras, S.** Harrison, J., & Kaminsky, J. Politicizing Engineering Pasts, Envisioning Engineering Futures. Annual Engineering, Social Justice and Peace Conference. Binghamton, New York. Jun 13-15.
- 2019 **Contreras, S.,** & Niles, S.* Community Engagement and Post-disaster Health Care: An Exploration of the Work of Medical Organizations in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. Los Angeles, California. Apr 24-27.
- 2019 Niles, S., * & **Contreras, S.** Health Care and Disaster Governance after Hurricane Maria. Pacific Sociological Association Conference. Oakland, California. Mar 28-31.
- 2019 **Contreras, S.,** Campbell, J., Tang, X., & Duke, T. Regenerative Cultures and Resilient Communities (RCx2). Community Engagement Conference: Partnering for a Resilient and Sustainable Future. Columbus, Ohio. Jan 23.
- 2018 Niles, S., * **Contreras, S.,** Roudbari, S., Kaminsky, J., & Harrison, J. Bringing in “The Social” Resisting and Assisting Social Engagement in Engineering Education. World Engineering Education Forum. Albuquerque, New Mexico. Nov 12-16.
- 2018 **Contreras, S.,** & Roudbari, S. Participation as a Two-way Street: Small Organizations Learning from Communities in International Development. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Buffalo, New York. Oct 25-28.
- 2016 **Contreras, S.,** Basolo, V., Goodrich, K., Matthew, R., Sanders, B., Feldman, D., Houston, D., & Cheung, W. An Investigation of Urban Development on Hillsides in Tijuana, Mexico. Annual Conference of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. Portland, Oregon. Nov 3-6.
- 2016 **Contreras, S.** Organizations and Participatory Development: Post-disaster Recovery in Haiti. Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. San Diego, California. Mar 16-19.
- 2016 Basolo, V., Goodrich, K., **Contreras, S.,** Matthew, R., Sanders, B., Feldman, D., Houston, D., Eguiarte, A., Karlin, B., Cheung, W., Schubert, J., & Luke, A. A Cross National Investigation of Flood Risk Perceptions and Hazard Preparedness in Two Urban Communities. Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. San Diego, California. Mar 16-19.
- 2015 Sanders, B., Matthew, R., Houston, D., Cheung, W., Karlin, B., Schubert, J., Gallien, T., Luke, A., **Contreras, S.,** Goodrich, K., Feldman, D., Basolo, V., Serrano, K., & Reyes, A. Communicating Flood Risk with Street-Level Data. American Geophysical Union Annual Meeting. San Francisco, California. Dec 14-18.
- 2015 Feldman, D., **Contreras, S.,** Karlin, B., Basolo, V., Matthew, R., Sanders, B., Houston, D., Cheung, W., Goodrich, K., Reyes, A., Serrano, K., Schubert, J., & Luke, A. Getting the Message Right – The Challenge of Communicating Flood Risk as a Boundary-Spanning Problem: A Case Study of Newport Estuary, California. Annual Natural Hazards Research and Applications Workshop. Broomfield, Colorado. Jul 19-22.

- 2015 **Contreras, S.** Organizations and Participatory Development: Post-disaster Recovery in Haiti. Center for Organizational Research. Irvine, California. May 29.
- 2015 Sanders, B., Matthew, R., Houston, D., Basolo, V., Feldman, D., Cheung, W., Schubert, J., Karlin, B., Goodrich, K., **Contreras, S.** Role of Participatory Mapping in Citizen Science: Challenges and Opportunities. Citizen Science Conference. San Jose, California. Feb 11-12.
- 2014 Basolo, V., & **Contreras, S.** Incorporating Sustainability and Resiliency for Housing in Earthquake Prone Areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. Annual Meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. San Antonio, Texas. Mar 19-22.
- 2013 Basolo, V., & **Contreras, S.** Urban Housing and Earthquakes in Developing Countries: Vulnerability, Resiliency, and the Goal of Sustainability. Association of European Schools of Planning Annual Congress. Dublin, Ireland. Jul 15-19.

AWARDS & HONORS

- 2025 National Academy of Science, Kavli Fellow
- 2023 USC Associated Students of Planning and Development Outstanding Professor of the Year
- 2020-2022 NSF Enabling the Next Generation of Hazards and Disasters Researchers Program
- 2021 OSU Sphinx-Mortar Outstanding Undergraduate Mentorship Award
- 2019 ACSP Junior Faculty of Color Workshop, Harvard University, Boston, MA
- 2016-2017 Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (administered by NASEM)
- 2016 Social Ecology Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, UCI
- 2016 Graduate Mentor Award, UCI
- 2015 Public Impact Fellowship, UCI
- 2015 Founding Fellows Award, Bill Anderson Fund for Hazard Education Research
- 2015 Dean's Award for Community Engagement, UCI
- 2014 Center for Organizational Research (COR) Grant, UCI
- 2013 Graduate Mentor Award, UCI
- 2012 Martha Newkirk Fellowship, UCI
- 2011-2012 Graduate Opportunity Fellowship, UCI
- 2007-2008 Chancellor's Fellowship for Graduate Study, UCB
- 2007 Berkeley Edge Summer Fellowship, UCB
- 2006 Summer Undergrad Program in Engineering Research Fellowship, UCB
- 2004-2006 Thurgood Marshall College Provosts Honors, UCSD
- 2005-2006 Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, UCSD

TEACHING

Urban Planning and Spatial Analysis, University of Southern California

Climate, Sustainability, and Environmental Planning (graduate)

Planning for Resilience: Natural Hazards, Climate Risks, and Vulnerability (graduate)

Planning for Environmental Justice, Equity, and Sustainability (undergraduate)

City and Regional Planning, The Ohio State University

Disaster Planning and Policies (graduate)

Global Environment in Planning (undergraduate)

Comparative Studies in Planning (undergraduate)

International Development Planning Studio (undergraduate/graduate)

Introduction to City and Regional Planning (undergraduate)

Research Methods (undergraduate)

Planning, Policy and Design, University of California Irvine

Quantitative Analysis (undergraduate)

Research Implementation in a U.S. – Mexico Border Context (undergraduate)

Environmental Hazards – (undergraduate)

SERVICE

Academic Journal Editorship

Associate Editor, Earthquake Spectra, 2024-2026

Editorial Board, Scholar Development Program, Journal of Urban Affairs, 2021-2026

Academic Journal Peer Review

Centro Journal

Development in Practice

Disasters

Environmental Hazards

Housing Policy Debate

Journal of the American Planning Association

Journal of Engineering Education

Journal of Planning Education and Research

Journal of Planning Literature

Journal of Urban Affairs

Landscape and Urban Planning

Natural Hazards

Natural Hazards Review

Perspectives of Earth and Space Scientists

Sociology of Race and Ethnicity

Sustainability

Sustainable Cities and Society

Water

External Peer Reviews

California Fifth Climate Change Assessment, Racial Equity and Climate Justice

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Service to the Field

Conference Program Committee, Urban Affairs Association, 2022-2024

Award Task Force, ACSP-Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2021-2023

Abstract Committee, Natural Hazards Research & Applications Workshop Researchers Meeting, 2023-2026

Founding Fellow, Bill Anderson Fund for Hazard Education Research, 2015

Service to the University

USC President's Working Group (PWG) on Sustainability in Education, Research, and Operations, Research Committee, 2024-2026

USC DUPSA, MUP Concentration Lead, Planning for Climate Change & Sustainability, 2021-2026

USC DUPSA Faculty Representative, Price Sustainability Certificate Redesign Ad-hoc Committee, 2021-2023

USC Price, PhD Admissions Sub-Committee, 2022-2023; 2025-2026

USC Price, Research Committee, 2021-2022

OSU CRP, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, 2017-2021

OSU CRP, Undergraduate Honors Thesis Program Committee, 2017-2021

OSU KSA, Digital Library Committee, 2017-2021

OSU College of Engineering, Humanitarian Development and Innovation Committee, 2017-2021

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Planning Association (APA)

Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP)

- Planners of Color Interest Group (POCIG)
- Global Planning Educators' Interest Group (GPEIG)
- Faculty Women's Interest Group (FWIG)

Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI)

International Sociological Association's International Research Committee on Disasters (ISA IRCD)

Social Science Extreme Events Research Network (SSEER)

Urban Affairs Association (UAA)

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEMENT

2008-2011 Project Engineer, Miyamoto International, CA

International earthquake and structural engineering firm specializing in technical design, disaster mitigation, and earthquake reconstruction

2008 Structural Engineer, Build Change, West Sumatra, Indonesia

International non-profit organization focused on earthquake-resistant housing design and training of local builders/engineers in Global South

2004 Structural Engineering Technician, Robertson and Associates, CA

Earthquake and structural engineering firm specializing in housing design

2003-2007 Program Assistant, California Alliance for Minority Participation, CA

Statewide initiative funded by NSF to strengthen the representation of underrepresented students in STEM at the University of California

MEDIA APPEARNCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Associated Press

LAist

Los Angeles Times

NPR

OurWeekly

PBS

Planetizen

Spectrum News 1