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Lanessa L. Chaplin, Esq. is Project Counsel for the New York Civil Liberties Union. Immediately prior to joining NYCLU she was an attorney for the Volunteer Lawyers Project, leading the New Start program where she fought to overcome employment discrimination. Prior to joining the Volunteer Lawyers Project, Lanessa was the Deputy Secretary of Intergovernmental Affairs to the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, working closely on anti-poverty initiatives, criminal justice reform. She began her legal career in 2012 at Hiscock Legal Aide's Appellate division where she drafted appeals to right the wrongs of the lower courts. Lanessa was legal counsel to the New York Samuel D. Roberts. Lanessa is Chair of the NAACP's Legal Redress Committee and Most notably the Founder and Executive Director of the William Herbert Johnson Bar Association of Central New York, the only minority bar association in CNY, which focuses on retaining, developing and promoting a minority legal presence in CNY. She was also part of a small sub-committee that founded the Diversity & Inclusion internship program for law students, connecting minority law students with paid internships. and a proud Henninger Black Knight.