Western Resource Advocates®

Executive Biography

Lauren Zapien
Annual Fund Manager

Lauren Zapien is the annual fund manager with Western Resource Advocates (WRA). She works to cultivate a multichannel annual fund program that is centered around donors, overseeing key fundraising events to increase philanthropic support and finance regular and ongoing expenses in service of the organization's mission. She is involved in the growth and expansion of WRA's donor base, generates leads for the major gifts team, achieves annual fund goals, and contributes to the overall success of the Development team.

As the only member of the Development team based in Arizona, Zapien is excited to further champion WRA's environmental and conservation goals in her home state to help ensure a more sustainable future overall in the West. She loves that she can protect and serve communities by connecting them to WRA's work in fighting climate change and its impacts.

Zapien has 15 years of experience advancing mission-driven organizations as a nonprofit development professional. During her career, she has worked for institutions in the arts, environmental, cultural, and health and human services sectors. She's held roles responsible for organizing galas, events, and festivals, while working with major donors and members to synergize creative visions that activate and connect communities.

Her perspective as a lifelong Arizonan and desert dweller shaped her understanding about why environmental advocacy is important to sustain communities of the West. After finishing her dance career, she broke into the nonprofit industry because she was looking for a fulfilling creative outlet that provided meaningful connection. Her work in this space links her with the everyday donor, and a broader donor base, that resonates with her passion — connecting with community.

Witnessing projects come to fruition from a seedling idea brings her joy. Zapien helped large-scale projects become reality that also added valuable community benefits, like the Canal Convergence project that highlights the intersectionality of environmentalism, art, and community by providing free events, art installations, and water education in the heart of the Valley of the Sun. Fighting for humanity and the ecosystems we are reliant on while giving a voice to the voiceless inspires her to further WRA's climate goals.

Zapien earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance from Arizona State University in 2007. She is based in Phoenix where she enjoys hiking, kayaking, biking, running, and weightlifting. She considers her two rescue cats, Mayvis and Hugo, as family members.

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