Elena Rocha is Senior Director of Youth Development Partnerships and Policy at the YMCA of the USA (Y-USA), where she manages the Y’s youth development portfolio of issues. Ms. Rocha has more than twenty years of experience in education policy, research, and advocacy, and draws on her work in early childhood education and K-12 education reform to help raise the profile of the Y with Congressional leaders and Executive Branch officials, and to increase the Y's presence and leadership in coalitions with influence on the youth development legislative agenda.

Prior to joining Y-USA, Ms. Rocha was a Senior Associate at edCount, LLC where she provided strategic planning and project management to support corporate development, and focused on strategic communications to highlight the relevance of the company’s work within the greater policy context. From 2009 to 2011, Ms. Rocha served the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) as a Special Assistant, where she guided OII’s work on increasing educational productivity and strategic communications, and managed aspects of organizational change to promote and increase external outreach.

Before serving in the federal government, she worked as an independent education consultant for national organizations including the National Council of La Raza and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Institute for a Competitive Workforce, promoting best practices and innovative approaches to educate high-need students and young children. Prior to this, Ms. Rocha was a Senior Education Analyst at the Center for American Progress, where she spent five years focusing on strategies to close academic achievement gaps and improve the quality of public education in America.

Ms. Rocha earned a Master of Public Service and Administration from the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University and a Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Anthropology and Mexican American Studies from the University of Arizona.