



# Nydelis Ortiz:

## Program Manager, Merchant Monitoring

In celebration of National Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month, LegitScript's Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) group features a Q&A with Nydelis Ortiz for staff spotlight.

### **Tell us about yourself and your role at LegitScript.**

My name is Nydelis Ortiz (she/her) and I am a Program Manager on the Merchant Monitoring team. I oversee a number of client contracts and work on ad-hoc projects as needed. I joined LegitScript in of June last year — 2020 wasn't quite exciting enough so I decided to add some spice by moving states and starting a new job. Although I've worked remotely my entire time at LegitScript, I immediately felt welcomed and am still just as excited to be part of the team as I was on my first day.

### **If you could have any superpower, what would it be?**

I get really excited about this question because this idea came to me years ago and I still love it, even though my superpower is pretty obscure. I am a very curious person and love to know everything that there is to know about anything, regardless of how trivial it may seem; so if I could have any one superpower, I would have the ability to touch any object and learn its full history. Like, if I stumble upon an old abandoned structure on a hike, I'd like to be able to touch it and learn about who built it, who lived there, what events happened in that building, and why no one lives there anymore, etc. I would definitely go back to Machu Picchu and use my power to finally solve the mystery of whether Incas or aliens built the structures.

I could use the power for smaller things, too, like on heirlooms or at consignment stores that have fun and bizarre items for sale, or for more serious things like solving crimes. On a deeper level, as an Afro-Latinx person, a lot of my family history has been lost, so I'd also love to touch any still-existing artifacts that my Taino or African ancestors may have used to learn more about them and their cultures. The possibilities are endless, really.



## What is the best piece of advice you received?

To never be scared of hearing “no.” To always dream big and ask for or pursue what you want because, at the end of the day even if you hear a “no,” nothing changes and you simply may not gain the thing that you asked for, but you likely learned something in the process. The risk in asking for or pursuing what you want is heavily net positive in the vast majority of cases. I try never to wonder “what if,” so I like to take chances and see what happens, because you never know when you’ll get that “yes” that changes everything. This can apply to so many things, whether it’s applying to a role you aren’t sure if you’re quite qualified for, applying to a dream school or company, or simply going out of your comfort zone and trying something new. This has been especially impactful to me, someone who is visibly a person of color, whose first language wasn’t English, and grew up in a low-income household. There was a lot I was told I couldn’t do, or had internalized beliefs that I wasn’t capable of achieving, and having this mentality opened a lot of doors for me throughout my life that has led me to where I am today.

## Finish the sentence: “On weekends you will typically find me ...”

Adventuring! I have a million hobbies and am not great at any of them because I want to do it all. I struggle to dedicate myself to one thing, but I really enjoy yoga, running, trail running, hiking, paddle boarding, sport climbing, bouldering, competing in Spartan races, snowboarding, cycling, you name it. As long as it involves movement, I will at least try it, if not incorporate it into my seemingly endless rotation of activities.

## What’s one thing LegitScripters may not know about you?

My early 20s were quite eventful; in one of my former lives, I was a beauty queen and competed in pageants. When I was 20 years old I competed in and won the Miss Vermont USA pageant and went on to compete at the Miss USA pageant in 2010. I don’t remember who any of my judges were aside from Oscar from The Office, but it was a lot of fun living my 15 minutes of fame. I got to meet a lot of interesting people that year, and the collective experience actually helped me tremendously in developing a number of skills that I still use today.

Some fun facts: I was the first Black Miss Vermont USA and I made friends with the (fellow Puerto Rican) actor Luis Guzman’s son, Cemí, and even went to his senior prom as his date. Shortly after this, when I was 22, I joined the Peace Corps and went to Peru to serve for 27 months as an economic development volunteer in a small coastal community. I brought back the best kind of souvenir from this experience, my Peruvian street pup León.

