

Equitable Recovery: Preventing Housing Insecurity. COVID-19, Rent, and Mortgage Relief.

Speaker Bios



WELCOMING REMARKS



Molly Martin

Director, New America Indianapolis

Molly G. Martin is the director of New America Indianapolis where she works with local communities on issues of racial and economic equity. Prior to joining New America, Martin spent ten years at Lumina Foundation—the nation's largest private foundation focused exclusively on postsecondary education — and focused on organizational learning, effective philanthropic practice, internal communications, and low-cost, public solutions for returning adult students. Before joining the philanthropic sector, Martin was an award-winning freelance writer and reporter; worked in student and academic affairs at Butler University and Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis; directed marketing for a healthcare start-up in her

native West Virginia; and clerked at the WV Consolidated Public Retirement Board.



Alaina Beverly

Assistant Vice President for Urban Affairs, University of Chicago

Alaina Beverly is an expert in urban policy, politics, civil rights, and community mobilization with over 15 years of experience in strategic planning, government relations, civic engagement, and program management. In her role as Assistant Vice President for Urban Affairs at the University of Chicago Office of Federal Relations & Office of Civic Engagement, Alaina shares the University's research, scholarship, and models of urban investment with federal policymakers and national partners. She is the founding director of the Urban America Forward program, an annual interdisciplinary, knowledge-sharing convening of national thought-leaders committed to

advancing equity through urban policy.

Prior to joining the University of Chicago in September 2013, Alaina served as the Associate Director for the White House Office of Urban Affairs as a member of the Obama Administration. In that role, Alaina laid the foundation for President Obama's urban office by identifying scalable models of urban innovation to inform the White House-interagency policy efforts. Alaina also served as Principal at The Raben Group, a prestigious public

policy and advocacy firm in Washington DC. She carried out litigation and advocacy strategies as a voting rights attorney for Advancement Project and the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund. Alaina graduated from Stanford University and the University of Michigan Law School.



Nancy Johnson

President and CEO, The Urban League of Greater Atlanta

With a passion and reputation for leadership in community and economic development, Nancy Flake Johnson returned to Atlanta in 2008 to become president/CEO of the Urban League of Greater Atlanta. Well-known across the country for her commitment and innovative approaches to education and advancing the black community through economic empowerment and urban development, Nancy quickly built partnerships in the public and private sectors throughout the metropolitan region to drive the Urban League’s impact on youth, adults and families through its initiatives and programs.

Nancy has developed and steered her committed and qualified team at the Urban League to create successful programs that meet people where they are and guide them toward financial and economic empowerment. Program platforms benefit job seekers across the spectrum –unemployed and underemployed youth and young adults, professionals, former inmates re-entering society after incarceration, first-time homebuyers, and entrepreneurs, homeless or underemployed adults. In partnership with businesses and other nonprofit organizations, she has increased the League’s impact on housing, education, career focused training, business development and job opportunities in underrepresented communities.

Nancy earned her Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in Accounting from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and received a Master of Science in Taxation from DePaul University in Chicago. Before joining the leadership of the Urban League in Detroit in 2006, Nancy operated the Howard University Small Business Development Center in the University’s School of Business where she inaugurated innovative programs that elevated attention to diverse entrepreneurs and business leaders around the nation.

TABLE-SETTING REMARKS



Charles Rutheiser

Senior Associate, Annie E. Casey Foundation

Charles Rutheiser is a senior associate in the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Center for Civic Sites and Community Change, where he manages the Foundation’s national grant-making on housing and community development, as well as Casey’s neighborhood transformation strategy in Baltimore. He also serves as an advisor to the Foundation’s unit responsible for making program- and mission-related investments in affordable housing and represents Casey on the US Impact Investing Alliance and the Community Investment Guarantee Pool.

Previously, Charles directed the graduate program in applied anthropology at Georgia State University and taught cultural anthropology and urban studies at the Johns Hopkins University, Bryn Mawr College and Western Michigan University. A former Fulbright and Inter-American Foundation Fellow, Charles 's publications include two books, *Imagineering Atlanta: the politics of place in the city of dreams* (1996) and *The Opportunity Makers: the first half-century of Sponsors for Educational Opportunity* (2016). He is the founding chairman of the Anchor Institution Funders Group of The Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and a founding member of Funders for Housing and Opportunity funding collaborative. He also serves on the board of The Mount Vernon Place Conservancy. Charles received a MA and PhD in cultural anthropology from the Johns Hopkins University and a BA in anthropology from New College of Florida.

PANELISTS



Commissioner Marisa Novara

Department of Housing, City of Chicago

Marisa Novara was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Housing (DOH) by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot in June 2019. As DOH commissioner, Novara directs the City's efforts to keep Chicago affordable for all income levels through projects and policies that address the needs of tenants, landlords, developers, homeowners and other community stakeholders. DOH programs, under her direction, support affordable housing construction and rehabilitation projects, provide purchase assistance for first-time homebuyers, enable accessible repairs for seniors, provide grants for home improvement projects, and offer development incentives for the redevelopment of vacant and abandoned buildings. DOH also administers the City's affordability requirements for multi-family construction projects and monitors compliance for all City-assisted affordable housing projects and policies. Before joining the department, Novara served as a policy director for Mayor Lightfoot's transition team and was formerly vice president of the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC). During her 8-year tenure at MPC, Novara designed and managed the Cost of Segregation project, a 2017 study that concluded how decades-old patterns of racial and economic segregation cost the Chicago region an estimated \$4.4 billion in additional income each year. She also led the subsequent creation of the region's first comprehensive guide to a more racially equitable future, among other reports, studies and articles. Prior to MPC, Novara directed affordable rental and for-sale housing development for Lawndale Christian Development Corp. Novara has a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan in sociology, master's degree from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration, certificate in affordable housing finance, development and management from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Masters degree in urban planning from the Istituto Politecnico di Milano in Milan, Italy.



Terri Lee

Chief Housing Officer, City of Atlanta

Terri Lee is a proven community development professional and operations strategist with a 20+ year track record of employing creative solutions to improve outcomes within the public and non-profit business sectors. In the many capacities she has served, Terri has been instrumental in developing organizational improvement approaches including agency restructurings and realignments; implementing strategies to encourage neighborhood stabilization efforts; and formulating policies to create community development investment opportunities that stimulate neighborhood transformation and growth.

In October 2018, Terri was appointed by Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms as the City of Atlanta's first Chief Housing Officer. In this role, she is responsible for leading the execution and coordination of the Mayor's affordable housing vision. Prior to her appointment, she held the position of Deputy Commissioner of the City of Atlanta's Department of City Planning. She has also served as a board member of the Freddie Mac National Affordable Housing Council, Trees Atlanta, Urban Land Institute Advisory Board, Rebuilding Together Atlanta and as a founding board member of the Atlanta Collaborative Land Trust.

Terri earned a Bachelor in Public Administration degree from Grambling State University and a Master of Public Policy and Administration degree from Jackson State University. Fulfilling a lifelong passion for higher education, Terri serves as an adjunct professor at Georgia State University where she teaches Real Estate Principles and Urban Development courses.



Tisha Edwards

Executive Director, Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success (Baltimore)

For 20 years, Tisha has leveraged executive government and private sector roles to advance the wellbeing of Baltimore's most marginalized communities, especially its children and youth. In 2019, she brought that breadth of experience to bear as Executive Director of the newly launched Mayor's Office of Children & Family Success, where she leads the city's strategy for investing in and radically improving the lives of children and families. In her decade at Baltimore City Public Schools—as high school principal, Chief of Staff and Interim CEO—Tisha guided 11,000 employees through a series of bold academic, structural and operational reforms. These, with a cultural shift that placed students at the center of district decision making, have been core to student achievement gains in the last decade and an ongoing and unprecedented well of community, institutional and corporate support for the district. In 2014, Tisha became Executive Vice President of the JS Plank and DM DiCarlo Family Foundation. In 2016, after leading the transition for the administration of newly elected Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh, she returned to work on behalf of youth and families as

President/CEO of BridgeEdU. Tisha is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and holds degrees from Georgia State University and the University of Maryland.



Warren Hanson

President and CEO, Greater Minnesota Housing Fund (Minneapolis)

Warren Hanson is the president and chief executive officer of the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund (GMHF) and Minnesota Equity Fund (MEF) and works with affordable housing developers, public and private funders, investors and government agencies to develop GMHF's programs and initiatives. Together, GMHF and its wholly owned subsidiaries provide over \$50 million in financing annually to affordable housing throughout Minnesota, and conduct innovative programs to advance new building technologies, employer participation in housing solutions, and now today COVID-19 recovery.

Hanson has over 40 years of experience in housing and economic development, city planning and public administration. Prior to GMHF, Hanson was Director of Riverfront Development and Neighborhood Development for the City of Saint Paul; and Director of Economic Development for West Bank Community Development Corporation (CDC) which redeveloped the Cedar-Riverside Urban Renewal area of Minneapolis. He is co-founder of Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF-USA), a national CDFI that finances small businesses, charter schools, and housing. He was intimately involved in development of Minneapolis' "new wave" food cooperatives in the 1970's and the establishment of Fresh Air Radio (KFAI-FM), a Twin Cities public radio station. Hanson holds a Master of Science degree in City and Regional Planning from the Pratt Institute in New York.



Breonne DeDecker

Program Director, Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative (New Orleans)

Breonne DeDecker is the Program Director at Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative, a community land trust and housing justice organization based in New Orleans. Her responsibilities include research and data analysis, fund development, and advocacy. She was the primary researcher and author of the report Short-Term Rentals, Long Term Impacts: The Corrosion of Housing Access and Affordability in New Orleans, which analyzes the impacts that Airbnb and tourism are having on the housing market in the city, and co-author of New Orleans' Eviction Geography: Results of an Increasingly Precarious Housing market, the first in-depth analysis of the eviction crisis in New Orleans. From 2007 – 2011, she worked with the New Orleans Citizen Participation Project, where she designed policies to include resident voices in land-use decision-making during the post-Katrina recovery process. She holds a BA in International Relations and a BFA in photography from the University of Georgia, a Masters in Sustainable Development from Brandeis University, and a certificate in Community Development Finance from the University of New Orleans. Her masters' thesis, done in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Community Innovator's Lab, focused on cooperative business development in the Bronx, New York.

RESPONDENTS



Dr. Breanca Merritt

Founding Director, Center for Research on Inclusion and Social Policy (Indianapolis)

Breanca Merritt is Founding Director of the Center for Research on Inclusion and Social Policy (CRISP) at the Indiana University Public Policy Institute and Clinical Assistant Professor at the O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs at IUPUI. Her work at CRISP involves working with a multidisciplinary team of analysts and students to understand the intersection of public policy and equity in Indianapolis, in areas such as poverty reduction, housing, public safety, and social service provision, among others. Their team’s work on housing focuses primarily on informing and supporting local organizations about racial/ethnic disparities in housing outcomes, such as housing instability, homelessness, evictions, rent burden, and the policies that contribute to them. Dr. Merritt is a recipient of the Indianapolis Business Journal’s Forty under 40 award, a Translating Research into Practice Scholar at IUPUI, and a member of the Diversity Scholars Network at the University of Michigan’s National Institutional Center for Institutional Diversity. Dr. Merritt has a Ph.D. in Health Promotion Sciences from the Hudson College of Public Health at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center and her M.A. in political science from Texas A&M University.