What Can We Learn from Communities About Equitably Providing Emergency Rental Assistance?

Speaker Biographies

Samantha Batko is a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where her research focuses on homelessness, housing instability, housing assistance, and supportive services. She has expertise in several US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homelessness programs, including homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. She is currently the principal investigator of an evaluation of Tipping Point Community's Chronic Homelessness Initiative in San Francisco, an evaluation of Hamilton County's FUSE permanent supportive housing project, development of the Emergency Rental Assistance Priority Index and targeting tool, a study of COVID-19 homelessness responses, and a study on the monetary and nonmonetary value of ending homelessness. Her other current projects include HUD's Pay for Success permanent supportive housing demonstration evaluation, the US Department of Labor's Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program evaluation, and an evaluation of New Jersey's Keeping Families Together program.

Before joining Urban, Batko spent 12 years at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, where she developed expertise in homelessness and housing policy, research, and technical assistance.

Andrea Bell is currently the director of housing stabilization at Oregon Housing and Community Services, which she joined in 2019. Growing up in the Dominican Republic and California, Bell saw a stark contrast in opportunities based on their respective ZIP codes, inspiring her public service career. Before joining Oregon Housing and Community Services, Bell served as the housing director within the Medicaid system. In that role, she led the operations and expansion of state-funded permanent supportive housing programs with Medicaid and state funding, accelerated opportunities to deploy sustainable solutions to end homelessness, and aligned funding and policy at the intersection of health and housing and performance-based models. During her tenure, she spearheaded the state's first tax credit project using Housing Trust Fund resources and led the governor's housing and health initiative that aimed to provide long-term housing opportunities for people experiencing both unsheltered homelessness and serious and persistent mental illness. Bell holds a master's degree in public health.

Joanne Karchmer has worked at the intersection of human services and public policy for more than two decades. Most recently, she served as Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf's deputy chief of staff, where she directed local, state, and federal legislative affairs and was the mayor's senior policy advisor focused on Oakland's response to homelessness and on immigrants' rights. Prior to that, she worked for the Port of

Oakland in intergovernmental affairs and in Oakland city government as a policy aide and advisor to former councilmember, Pat Kernighan.

Karchmer began her career as an attorney in Boston working to assist low-income and working families in securing benefits and compensation to stabilize their incomes. Shortly after relocating to the Bay Area, she served as a staff attorney at HomeBase, a nonprofit, public policy law firm that works with communities to develop effective responses to homelessness through research, policy development, planning, and advocacy. She later became a public interest law counselor at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law School, where she began the school's public interest mentorship program. She was quickly elevated to the role of executive director of career development and launched the law school's first postgraduate public interest law fellowship program, which financially supports recent graduates pursuing public interest careers. She currently serves on the board of directors for East Bay Agency for Children and has worked on numerous political and ballot initiative campaigns in Massachusetts and Oakland. Karchmer earned her undergraduate degree at Cornell University and her juris doctorate at Boston College Law School.

Monique King-Viehland is associate vice president for metropolitan housing and communities policy at the Urban Institute, where she is leading new work on racial equity and housing justice. She is also working with researchers on policy, communications, and business development to grow compelling bodies of work and embedding racial equity across the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center's practice areas. King-Viehland previously served as executive director of the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA), where she oversaw 580 employees and a budget of $600 million. She was the first woman and African American to take the helm of the 40-year-old agency. She led the agency through significant transformation, including the merger of the Community Development Commission and housing authority into one unified agency to augment cross-agency thinking and client service, increase organizational effectiveness, and reposition the agency as a forward-thinking, industry leader in the provision of housing, community, and economic development.

She enhanced the LACDA's efforts to fight the homelessness and affordability crises, including a 10-fold increase in affordable and supportive units funded and a more than 100 percent increase in project-based rental voucher commitments while providing housing and housing assistance to hundreds of thousands annually. In 2019, she was recognized as an LA Power Woman by Bisnow.

King-Viehland has 20 years of experience in housing, community, and economic development. She is a member of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Ad Hoc Committee on Black People Experiencing Homelessness and a member of the policy advisory committee for the California Roadmap HOME 2030 initiative. In late 2020, King-Viehland served as a member of the US Housing and Urban Development Agency Review Team for the Biden-Harris Transition Team. She graduated with honors from Smith College and has a master's in public policy from Carnegie Mellon University.