

## Building AAPI Inclusion in Federal Policy

### Speaker Biographies

**Neel Kashkari (@neelkashkari)** is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. He took office on Jan. 1, 2016, following a national search conducted by the Bank's independent board of directors. In this role, he serves on the Federal Open Market Committee, bringing the Ninth District's perspective to monetary policy discussions in Washington, D.C. In addition to his responsibilities as a monetary policymaker, Kashkari oversees all operations of the Bank, including supervision and regulation, treasury services, and payments services. Kashkari leads the Bank's many initiatives. Among them, he was instrumental in establishing the Opportunity & Inclusive Growth Institute, whose mission is to ensure that world-class research helps to improve the economic well-being of all Americans. Most recently, he has joined with retired Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page to propose amending Minnesota's constitution to make a quality public education a fundamental right. This effort supports the Fed's mandate to achieve maximum employment, with education being a key to obtaining a good job. Under Kashkari's leadership, the Minneapolis Fed also released an action plan on "Ending Too Big to Fail," which calls for tighter bank regulations to avoid future taxpayer bailouts of large financial institutions. Committed to increasing transparency at the Fed, Kashkari has published in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and Financial Times and is active on Twitter and Instagram. He also serves on the board of the Economic Club of Minnesota and as a member of the Aspen Economic Strategy Group. Kashkari began his career as an aerospace engineer at TRW in Redondo Beach, Calif., where he developed technology for NASA space science missions. Following graduate school, he joined Goldman Sachs in San Francisco, where he helped technology companies raise capital and pursue strategic transactions. From 2006 to 2009, Kashkari served in several senior positions at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. In 2008, he was confirmed as assistant secretary of the Treasury. In this role, he oversaw the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) during the financial crisis. Kashkari received the Alexander Hamilton Award, the Treasury Department's highest honor for distinguished service. Following his tenure in Washington, Kashkari returned to California in 2009 and joined PIMCO as managing director and member of the executive office. He left the firm in 2013 to explore returning to public service and, in 2014, ran for governor of California on a platform focused on economic opportunity. Raised in Ohio, Kashkari earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and his MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He lives with his wife, Christine, children, Uly and Tecumseh, and Newfoundland dogs—Webster and Newsome—in Orono, Minn.

**Sonal Shah (@SonalRShah @taaforg)** is the founding President of The Asian American Foundation (TAAF). One of the foremost global leaders on social impact and innovation, Shah has started and led social impact efforts in academia, government, and the private and philanthropic sectors for over twenty-five years. Prior to her appointment at TAAF, Shah founded and led Georgetown University's Beek Center for Social Impact and Innovation, a cross-disciplinary center that provided students a first-hand opportunity to work on social impact projects in the public, private and social sectors. Shah has extensive

experience in both the public and private sectors. She served as Deputy Assistant to President Obama and Director of the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation, where she was tasked with creating innovative approaches to using technology for social programs across the federal government and with building public private partnerships at scale. Previously, she worked as an international economist at the Department of Treasury, setting up the central bank in Bosnia, working for post-conflict reconstruction in Kosovo, and implementing poverty reduction strategies in Africa. In the private sector, Shah led technology initiatives for civic voice and impact investing as the head of Global Development Initiatives at Google.org. Prior to her time at Google.org, she developed the environmental strategy and ran the initiatives for investing in clean technologies at Goldman Sachs. Shah serves on the boards of Oxfam America, the UBS Optimus Foundation, and The Century Foundation. She also serves as an adviser to the Democracy Fund and is coordinating the Initiative on Tech & Society at Georgetown University. In 2020, she served as the National Policy Director for Mayor Pete Buttigieg's presidential campaign.

**Maria Torres-Springer (@MTorresSpringer)** is vice president for US programs at the Ford Foundation. She oversees the foundation's domestic programming for Civic Engagement and Government, Creativity and Free Expression, Just Cities and Regions, Technology and Society, Future of Work(ers), and Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice. Previously, Maria spent almost 15 years in public service with the City of New York. She has led three agencies with over 3,000 employees and approximately \$2 billion in annual operating budgets, addressing some of the city's most significant public policy challenges. Throughout her tenure in government, she worked to create powerful partnerships among communities, business, and the agencies she has led in pursuit of expanded economic opportunity for all New Yorkers. Maria served as commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the nation's largest municipal housing agency. She led the implementation of Housing New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio's five-borough, 12-year plan to create or preserve 300,000 affordable homes. During her tenure, she steered the financing of approximately 60,000 affordable homes, more than any two-year period in HPD's history. She focused on the production of housing for the city's most vulnerable communities while launching several new programs to protect tenants' rights. Earlier, as the first woman to serve as president of the New York City Economic Development Corporation, Maria led the implementation of the new city-wide ferry service and made major investments in key sectors of New York City's economy. Marshaling the energy and drive of community leaders, she also spearheaded several neighborhood revitalization plans across the city. As commissioner of the New York City Department of Small Business Services, Maria prioritized efforts to raise wages and support women- and immigrant-owned businesses. She also launched Women Entrepreneurs NYC and, with the innovative Tech Talent Pipeline program, worked to prepare New Yorkers for 21st-century jobs. Maria also served previously as executive vice president and chief of staff at NYCEDC during the administration of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and as chief operating officer for Friends of the High Line. Maria earned her bachelor's degree in ethics, politics, and economics from Yale University and a master's in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. She is on the boards of the Association for a Better New York Foundation, Living Cities, and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP). She serves as co-chair of the GoVoteNYC Fund and is a member of the New York Women's Forum as well as the Visiting Committee of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Previously, Maria served as Chair of the NYC Housing Development Corporation and on the boards of the New York City Housing Authority and the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation.

**Paul Watanabe (@UMassBoston)** is the Director of the Institute for Asian American Studies and Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He served on President Obama's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and as the first Chair of the U.S. Census Bureau's National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations. He is President of the Board of Directors of the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund; a member of the Advisory Board of the New Americans Integration Institute; the Board of Directors of the South Shore Health System; and the Board of Trustees of the Harry H. Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund. His publications have appeared in the principal journals of his field as well as in scholarly volumes. He is the author of *Ethnic Groups, Congress, and American Foreign Policy*.

**Sarah Rosen Wartell (@swartell)** is the third president of the Urban Institute since it was founded in 1968. During her tenure, Urban celebrated a milestone anniversary by moving into a state-of-the-art research and convening facility and launched its Next50, a strategy to advance upward mobility, equity, and shared prosperity by bringing the power of knowledge to help changemakers accelerate solutions. Under Wartell's leadership, Urban aims to leverage cutting-edge technology and data science, understand and confront structural racism, and deliver timely, relevant, and actionable research to communities, capitals, board rooms, and wherever innovators are pursuing bold ideas. Previously, Wartell was deputy assistant to the president for economic policy and deputy director of the National Economic Council. She also worked in various roles at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. After government service, Wartell was the founding chief operating officer and then executive vice president of the Center for American Progress. Her work focused on the economy and housing markets, and she directed the Mortgage Finance Working Group and the Doing What Works government performance program. Before her tenure in government, she practiced law with the Washington, DC, firm Arnold & Porter. Wartell currently serves on the boards of Enterprise Community Partners and the Georgetown Day School, Bank of America's National Community Advisory Council, and the Sadie Collective's Advisory Board. She previously served on the boards of the Low-Income Investment Fund, the Center for Urban Science and Progress at New York University, and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (now known as Prosperity Now). Her areas of expertise include community development, consumer finance, asset building, and housing finance. Wartell has a bachelor's degree with honors in urban affairs from the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. She has a law degree from Yale Law School.