

Opportunity in the Crisis: Findings from a Year of Research on Renters in the Pandemic and the Programs Needed to Stabilize Them

Speaker Biographies

Opening Remarks

Mary K. Cunningham is vice president for metropolitan housing and communities policy at the Urban Institute, where her research focuses on homelessness, housing, concentrated poverty, and efforts to improve family self-sufficiency and overall well-being among low-income families. She has expertise in several US Department of Housing and Urban Development homelessness and assisted housing programs, including permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, emergency shelter, Housing Choice Vouchers, Family Self-Sufficiency, HOPE VI, and the Moving to Opportunity demonstration. She directs studies examining the impact of housing vouchers on child welfare involvement, the impact of supportive housing on high-need families in the child welfare system, and a homelessness prevention program for at-risk veterans. From 2005 to 2008, Cunningham launched and directed the Homeless Research Institute, the research and education arm of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. She also cochaired a research council on homelessness comprising nationally recognized academics and policy researchers. She also authored numerous reports, including *A Research Agenda for Ending Homelessness* and *Homelessness Counts*.

Erika Poethig is Special Assistant to the President for Housing and Urban Policy in the White House Domestic Policy Council. In this capacity, she leads interagency policy development on the housing and community development components of the President's Build Back Agenda. Prior to joining the Biden-Harris administration she served as vice president and chief innovation officer at the Urban Institute, where she created and led the Research to Action Lab, an innovation hub serving decisionmakers and creative thinkers eager to effect social change. Before joining Urban, Poethig was acting assistant secretary for policy, development, and research at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. During her tenure in the Obama administration, she was also deputy assistant secretary for policy development and was a leading architect of the White House Council for Strong Cities and Strong Communities. As associate director for housing at the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, she developed grantmaking strategies focused on rental housing policy and research and research on how housing matters. In the 1990s, she was assistant commissioner for policy, resource, and program development at the City of Chicago's Department of Housing and developed Mayor Richard Daley's campaign to combat predatory lending, prevent foreclosures, and stabilize communities. Previously, she was associate project director of the Metropolis Project, which produced the Metropolis 2020 agenda for regional leadership around the major issues faced by metropolitan Chicago.

Panel : Where do we stand in the eviction crisis and what has worked to keep renters stably housed?

Lisa K. Bates, PhD is Associate Professor at Portland State University in the Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning and is Portland Professor in Innovative Housing Policy. She is also affiliated with PSU's Black Studies department. Her scholarship focuses on housing and community development policy and planning,

and her research and practice aims to build new models for emancipatory planning practices and to dismantle institutional racism. In Portland, Dr. Bates has served as the co-lead for the Technical Advisory Group on Equity and Civic Engagement for the Portland Plan and on the Creation Committee for the Office of Equity and Human Rights, which address institutionalized racism in city government. She has participated in the Partnership for Racial Equity, a working group convened by the Urban League of Portland to create a Racial Equity Strategy Guide for public agencies. She was also a co-lead for the Housing and Communities committee of the Greater Portland Pulse, a regional indicators project. Dr. Bates' work includes deep engagements with community-based organizations working towards racial justice and housing rights and supporting Portland's anti-displacement coalition. She also has an advisory partnership with local government partners including research, planning, and policy formulation and evaluation. Her work to describe gentrification and displacement in Portland has been widely cited and used as a model for planning to address neighborhood change. She is currently collaborating with Dr. Amie Thurber to evaluate Portland's ground-breaking policy to support housing opportunities for families displaced over multiple generations of urban renewal.

Mark Treskon is a senior research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. His current projects include an evaluation of financial coaching programs and a study measuring the effects of arts-related initiatives on community development. His research interests include housing and homeownership policy as well as neighborhood development and change. Treskon has published peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on community-based planning, home lending policy advocacy, and the arts economy. He has a broad background in quantitative and qualitative research and geographic information systems. Previously, Treskon worked on policy issues around taxation, higher education, and economic development at the Center for Working Families. He has also researched housing and home lending issues for the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the National Community Reinvestment Coalition. Treskon has a bachelor's in geography from the University of Chicago, a master's in urban planning from the University of Toronto, and a PhD in sociology from New York University.

Emma Foley works as a research analyst at the National Low Income Housing Coalition where her work focuses on tracking and monitoring the rollout of COVID-19 emergency rental assistance programs. Prior to working at NLIHC, Emma worked as a research analyst evaluating the efficacy of federally funded social programs. Emma also served as an AmeriCorps member assisting with the development and preservation of affordable housing in New Orleans, Louisiana. Emma is a recent graduate of Duke University's Sanford School where she received her Master of Public Policy.

Reed Jordan is the Housing Affordability Grant Program Manager at the Wells Fargo Foundation. He manages a grant portfolio that supports affordable housing systems change through transformative and innovative policymaking, research, and practice. The portfolio focuses on efforts that will address root causes of racial inequality in our housing systems and growing threats and vulnerabilities from climate change. Most recently, Reed was a senior policy advisor at the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development. He previously was a Harvard Kennedy School public policy fellow with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and a researcher with the Urban Institute's Research to Action Lab and Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. He holds a Master's degree in city planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is based in New York City.

Panel: How have landlords responded to the pandemic and what are the implications of their behaviors?

Elijah de la Campa is a senior research associate in economics and Urban Analytics at Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative. Elijah is an economist whose research focuses on how the distribution of public goods in urban settings affects citizen welfare. In his current role, Elijah works with city leaders to design and lead evaluations of public programs that take a data-driven approach to decision-making. Prior to the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, Elijah was a doctoral student at the Harvard Kennedy School. His dissertation focuses on the criminogenic and social consequences of New York City's Stop and Frisk Program. During his PhD, Elijah was also an Innovation Fellow with the Government Performance Lab where he helped cities across the country better incorporate the use of data, metrics, and incentives in the procurement process. Prior to graduate school, Elijah was a research assistant for both MDRC and Princeton University's Industrial Relations Section. Elijah is a proud New Jersey native. He holds a PhD in Public Policy from Harvard University and BAs in Economics and History from Columbia University.

Nathaniel Decker is a postdoctoral scholar at the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley. His recent research has examined topics such as the behaviors of small rental property owners, the impact of technology on the housing search, and the drivers of rent changes for individual units. Nat received his PhD in Urban Planning from UC Berkeley in August 2020. Prior to his doctoral studies he was a senior associate at Forsyth Street Advisors, an advisory and asset management firm based in New York focused on affordable housing, real estate, and municipal and impact investment.

Lauren Lowery is the Program Director for Housing and Community Development at National League of Cities. Her research focus at National League of Cities includes affordable housing, housing stability, homelessness, and community development. Prior to joining NLC, Ms. Lowery worked seven years in local government serving the residents of the City of Norfolk and the City of Chattanooga. During her time in Norfolk's city hall, she served as the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and the Strategy & Policy Manager for the Department of Neighborhood Development where she developed and implemented an award-winning, comprehensive neighborhood revitalization strategy. Ms. Lowery has a Master of Public Administration from Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Mercedeh Mortazavi is a Vice President at JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s Global Philanthropy department, a global leader dedicated to driving inclusive economic growth in communities worldwide. JPMorgan Chase has made a commitment to invest \$2 billion over five years to strengthen workforce systems, strengthen neighborhoods, grow small businesses, and improve the financial health of individuals – an investment part of the firm's \$30 billion racial equity initiative. Mercedeh is responsible for helping establish and execute the firm's national philanthropic strategies on neighborhood development, a \$400 million, five year portfolio focused on affordable housing connected to economic opportunities. Mercedeh also manages large-scale national initiatives, including the PRO Neighborhoods Competition and Advancing Cities Challenge aimed at advancing solutions that tackle major social and economic challenges across the country. Mercedeh has been with the firm for over 7 years. Prior to this role, Mercedeh managed the Greater Washington, D.C. region strategic initiatives in Corporate Responsibility by working across lines of business to implement business, community, and employee strategies to increase brand awareness, revenue, and impactful philanthropic and business initiatives. Mercedeh holds a Bachelor's of Science in Business Management and International Business from the Pennsylvania State University's Smeal College of Business. She also studied International Business at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan.

Concluding Remarks

Ingrid Gould Ellen, the Paulette Goddard Professor of Urban Policy and Planning, is a Faculty Director at the NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. She presently teaches courses in microeconomics, urban economics, and urban policy research. Professor Ellen's research interests center on housing and urban policy. She is author of *Sharing America's Neighborhoods: The Prospects for Stable Racial Integration* (Harvard University Press, 2000) and more recently editor of *The Dream Revisited: Contemporary Debates About Housing, Segregation and Opportunity* (Columbia University Press, 2019). She has written numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters related to housing policy, community development, and school and neighborhood segregation. Professor Ellen has held visiting positions at the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution. She attended Harvard University, where she received a bachelor's degree in applied mathematics, an M.P.P., and a Ph.D. in public policy.