The Equity Imperative:  
Leveraging Technology to Advance Inclusion  

Plan With, Not For:  
Why Community Engagement Is Essential  

Speaker Biographies

Richard Ezike is a senior policy associate at the Urban Institute, where he manages the Accelerating Innovation for Inclusion initiative, a $1.5 million research program sponsored by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth. The program hopes to raise visibility and fill knowledge gaps on what the digital transition means for American cities and foster opportunities to reduce inequity and promote upward mobility. Ezike previously worked at the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, where he focused on transportation equity and accessibility. He has contributed to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board’s Long Range Transportation Plan, organized and moderated transportation-themed panels at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference, and published in media such as the Washington Post, Futurism.com, and the Washington Informer. Ezike has a BS in chemical engineering from North Carolina State University and a PhD in chemical engineering from the University of Michigan.

Elsa Falkenburger is a principal research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where she is part of the Neighborhoods and Youth Development initiative. Her portfolio includes being project manager for the Housing Opportunity and Services Together demonstration and the Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety project—follow-on research to the Moving to Opportunity demonstration. Falkenburger has also worked with the DC Promise Neighborhoods Initiative since its launch in 2010, assisting with the needs assessment and process study. She has experience working on place-based initiatives, community-based participatory research, performance measurement, formative evaluations, and other qualitative research methods. Before joining Urban, Falkenburger advocated for best practices in youth gang prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation in the United States and Latin America. During graduate school, she worked at the KDK-Harman Foundation, helping grantees develop logic models and performance indicators for evaluating and improving educational programs for low-income youth. Falkenburger has an MPA from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.

Noel Hidalgo is the cofounder and executive director of BetaNYC, the nation’s largest open government and civic technology meet-up. Since 2009, Hidalgo has organized BetaNYC to be a driving force to improve New York City’s use of technology and share its data. BetaNYC has advocated for a suite of government transparency laws, including the city’s transformative open data law and city record online law. BetaNYC runs the New York City Civic Innovation Lab/Fellows program in partnership with Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and curates the NYC School of Data community conference. Hidalgo was a technology and democracy fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School’s Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, served as an inaugural member of Code for America’s National Advisory Council, and is an affiliate at the Data & Society Research Institute.

Dan Lurie is the chief of policy for the City of Chicago under Mayor Lori Lightfoot. A Chicago native, Lurie is a community development expert with experience in local, state, and federal government to advance social justice. His work has focused on the development of innovative policy approaches to address fundamental social challenges, including how systems intersect to shape community and how new coalitions can support that work. Before joining the City of Chicago, Lurie was a senior fellow and director of the New America Chicago office. Lurie served in the Obama administration from 2009 to 2016, including as deputy director for policy for then-Vice President Joe Biden. Before that, he was senior adviser to the chairman and director of strategic partnerships at the National Endowment for the Arts. Lurie previously was senior adviser to Deputy Secretary Ron Sims at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Lurie has a BA in American history from the University of Michigan and a JD from the University of Michigan Law School.
Chelsea Mauldin is a social scientist and designer with a focus on government innovation. She directs the Public Policy Lab, a New York City nonprofit organization that designs better public policy and services for low-income and at-risk Americans. The Public Policy Lab partners with government agencies to develop more satisfying and effective policies and services through ethnographic research, human-centered design, rapid prototyping, and formative evaluation. Previously, Mauldin was a consultant to municipal and federal agencies, directed a community development organization, and led government partnerships at a public-space advocacy nonprofit. She volunteers in leadership roles with the Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation, the New School, and the Aspen Institute, among other organizations, and was named Civic Entrepreneur of the Year by GovFresh. Mauldin received a bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and an MBA in city design and social economics from the London School of Economics.