

NYC Inclusive Growth Initiative Announces Steering Committee to Develop an Agenda for Equitable Recovery

NYCETC, ANHD, and RPA selected a 20-person steering committee representative of the diversity of New York City to develop a plan for the future of economic development, talent development, and affordable housing

NEW YORK, NY - (February 8, 2021) - The [NYC Inclusive Growth Initiative](#) (NYCIGI), a coalition formed by the New York City Employment and Training Coalition (NYCETC), the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD), and Regional Plan Association (RPA), today announced the selection of a 20-person steering committee to develop an agenda for inclusive economic growth across New York City. Over the next few months, the committee will create recommendations for inclusive and equitable systems of economic growth -- focusing on adding good jobs, expanding affordable housing, and reducing structural inequities -- and advocate for their implementation to government and civic stakeholders. The steering committee will actively urge NYC mayoral candidates and the newly elected administration to implement an agenda reflective of their recommendations in the first 100 days in office.

“To chart a new course for our city, we need a new cohort of leaders and advocates that actually represent the diversity of New York,” said **Jose Ortiz, Jr., CEO of the New York City Employment and Training Coalition**. “For too long, policies have failed because they aren’t being made by the people who need to benefit from them. That’s about to change. This new coalition will draw on their ideas and lived experiences to craft an agenda for recovery, prioritizing NYC’s underserved communities and hardest hit areas. There is no one better to put New York back on track than the people who know it inside and out.”

“New Yorkers are eager for a new approach to development that intentionally supports and serves all of our city’s communities --especially those who have been historically marginalized,” said **Barika X. Williams, Executive Director of the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development**. “ANHD is excited to work with and empower the steering committee, which captures the diverse identities, experiences, and expertise that we need to move forward an inclusive, equitable approach to economic growth.”

“New York City is at a turning point,” said **Kate Slevin, Senior Vice President of State Programs and Advocacy at Regional Plan Association**. “Either the city can come together to address growing inequality as the recovery progresses, or we can continue to fail many of the city’s residents. RPA is honored to work with this impressive group of people to set a course toward a more equitable and inclusive city.”

NYCIGI’s steering committee members represent the diversity of New York City, and they were selected based on their academic, professional and lived experiences, interest in local policy and systemic

change, passion and connection to key NYC issue areas, and to the city itself. They come from all five boroughs and represent and reflect our immigrant communities, single parents, small business owners, educators, queer communities, veterans, labor unions, individuals with disabilities, NYCHA residents, and the SUNY and CUNY systems. Leveraging their unique New York viewpoint and love of this city, they will help to address persistent economic, social and racial inequities magnified by COVID-19 by offering a new vision for how economic policy decisions are made and delivered. The committee includes:

- **Leila Bozorg, Chief of Strategy and Policy at NYC Kids RISE**, a nonprofit working to provide every NYC public school student with an investment account for higher education that can be used as a broader wealth-building platform for their families and communities. Prior to her current role, Leila spent a decade working in government on a range of affordable housing, land use, and community development programs and policies, most recently as the Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood Strategies + Tenant Resources at the NYC Housing Preservation & Development (HPD); and earlier at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), first as a Presidential Management Fellow, and later as a Senior Policy Advisor. Leila is also a new board member of Open New York. The child of Iranian immigrants, Leila holds a BA in Government Studies from Wesleyan University and a Master of City Planning from MIT.
- **Carl Callender, Veterans Coordinator at the Institute for Career Development**, specializes in the development and management of veteran workforce development programs. A Marine Corps Reserve veteran and a 2017 Vassar Posse Veterans Scholar, Carl has directed community-based social service programs such as the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Jobs-to-Build and community food pantry program supported by the Food Bank of NYC.
- **Jackson Collins, Executive Director of Prep for Prep**, a leadership development and educational access organization focused on diversifying America's leadership pool. A native of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, Jackson earned his bachelor's degree from Amherst College, holds a master's degree in Education Leadership from Columbia University's Klingenstein Center, and a doctorate in Educational and Organizational Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania. He has spoken nationally on the topics of racial literacy and school climate. Jackson is also the creator of Cards On Race, a dynamic learning tool to examine race in America.
- **Priscilla Dominguez, NYC DOE Community Coordinator and CEO of Priscilla Dominguez Consulting**, is a bilingual, bicultural Dominican-American community engagement and outreach professional working to support the city of New York by bringing in alternatively certified teachers to the New York City Public School system. In her current role, Priscilla has enrolled and prepared almost 2,500 new teachers to pursue and accept roles in NYC DOE public schools. She is a union member of District Council 37, Local 372, and an alumna of the 2019 Lillian Roberts Women Leadership Academy Class, the 2020 Leaders of Color NY Chapter for Democrats of Education Reform, and the NYC 2019 Mujeres de Hacer Latina Professional Development program.
- **Nakisha (Nikki) Evans, Executive Director of Jeremiah Program-Brooklyn**, is committed to disrupting poverty for single mother families two generations at a time. The Jeremiah Program provides a supportive community for determined single mothers to pursue a career-track,

college education, while also offering a combination of quality early childhood education supports, housing assistance, and empowerment/life skills training. Previously, Nikki served as Director of the Office of Workforce Partnerships at CUNY where she led the implementation of several new tech training and skills development initiatives including the CUNY Techworks workforce training initiative and CUNY's first Virtual Upskilling Training Challenge.

- **Michael Flynn, Principal and Director of City Strategies at Sam Schwartz Consulting**, is a nationally recognized leader in urban mobility with 20 years experience helping communities envision and implement transportation systems that support equity, climate action, economic development, and resilience. At Sam Schwartz, he leads the firm's integrated planning and strategic planning practice and has worked closely with dozens of cities across North America on plans for fairer and healthier mobility and infrastructure. Prior to joining Sam Schwartz, Michael served for ten years at the NYC Department of Transportation.
- **Robyn Frye, Chief Program Officer of Practice of Peace Foundation, Inc.**, currently serves the New York non-profit in support of their program and organizational development within their focused work of providing shelter, supportive housing and programs for homeless families and single individuals. Robyn brings over 20 years of experience as a manager and consultant with expertise in philanthropic initiatives and project development. She is experienced in contract negotiation and compliance, and in establishing creative and effective funding streams.
- **Christian González-Rivera, Director of Strategic Policy Initiatives at the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging**, CUNY's aging research, advocacy, policy, and professional development center located at Hunter College. He translates results and findings from academic research and demonstration projects into policy and practice, creates strategic partnerships across institutions and organizations, and helps formulate and communicate Brookdale's policy priorities. He is president of the State Society on Aging of New York and a fellow of the Sterling Network.
- **Yahshaanyah Hill, Vice President of Workforce Opportunity Investments at the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation (UMEZ)**, is responsible for providing leadership, vision, and strategic direction for UMEZ's grantmaking strategy in workforce development to drive economic growth and create opportunities for the hyperlocal community. Prior to this, Yahshaanyah served as the Assistant Director of Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability at the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), where she launched the Job Generation Unit and designed institutional procedures to maximize resident economic and job opportunities through NYCHA's operations and contracting. Yahshaanyah has also held management positions in workforce development, research and policy, and economic development with the NYC Department of Small Business Services and NYC Economic Development Corporation. She is committed to strengthening the economic mobility of underserved communities in New York City by building equitable, inclusive and strong local economies.
- **Sydney Kopp-Richardson, Director of the National LGBT Elder Housing Initiative at SAGE**, is working to reshape the housing landscape and increase the availability of safer LGBT elder housing through policy, advocacy, research, and housing development. Previously, Sydney worked in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City in direct service, organizing and advocacy,

and policy analysis around affordable housing development. Sydney brings a reverence for the expertise and legacies of LGBTQ elders in the formation of policies and programming developed to serve them in the fight for collective liberation, and she brings this to SAGE's national housing initiative.

- **LaToya Meaders, President & CEO of Collective Fare & Collective Food Works Inc.,** brings over 20 years of experience in the foodservice and hospitality industry to the restaurant and foodservice consulting field. Amid the pandemic, Collective Fare has served over 500,000 fresh healthy meals and distributed over 30,000 lbs of fresh produce and shelf-stable food items to help close the food gap in Brownsville, Brooklyn. In 2016, LaToya combined talents with Chef Femi Rodney to build the Brownsville Community Culinary Center. They wrote a 10-week intensive culinary training program which would be implemented into the 40-week workforce development program at the BCCC geared towards rehabilitating previously incarcerated individuals.
- **Ken Miles, ARISE! Program Leader at West Harlem Development Corporation,** serves as the strategy and implementation lead for WHDC's ARISE! summer youth development program. ARISE! promotes continued educational enrichment and career exposure along with direct cash transfers for eligible teens throughout the district. Professionally, his career spans public and private sectors, including digital advertising, media, and public health. Ken serves on Manhattan Community Board 9's Youth, Education & Libraries Committee, and on the 125th Street Business Improvement District advisory board.
- **Papa Ndiaye, Career Development Coordinator (IRC) at International Rescue Committee,** is a nonprofit professional and Brooklynite. He is originally from Senegal and his background is in international development and social entrepreneurship. In his current work at the IRC, he serves NYC's immigrant communities through workforce development services and programs to strengthen their financial capabilities. He is committed to contributing to building more inclusive, participatory, and vibrant communities.
- **Michael Partis, Executive Director of the Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative (BCDI),** a nonprofit focused on advancing economic democracy through shared wealth strategies and community-based planning with working-class Bronx residents. He is also the co-founder of The Bronx Brotherhood Project, a volunteer-based college success & mentorship program for Black and Latino teens at New Settlement College Access Center. Formerly, he was the Director of South Bronx Rising Together (SBRT).
- **Daphany Sanchez, Executive Director of Kinetic Communities,** is a New York native who has been passionately working as an energy equity advocate for almost ten years. Daphany founded Kinetic Communities in 2017, a New York certified social enterprise Benefit Corporation which advocates and implements strategic energy equity market transformations for diverse New York communities. Kinetic Communities has received recognition for their vital work, ensuring front line communities and people of color are a priority in a restorative and just clean energy transition.
- **Mirtha Santana, Chief Program Office at Riseboro Community Partnership,** knows from personal experience the impact of affordable housing as a long-time resident of the low-income community of Bushwick, Brooklyn. Her commitment to homelessness prevention stems from

her deep belief that no child should be sleeping in a homeless shelter. Mirtha joined RiseBoro Community Partnership in 2007 and immersed herself in services for low-income, disenfranchised and homeless families. She also held positions in community outreach and workforce development. In her tenure, Mirtha has grown the programming and services immensely and now holds the position of Vice President of Riseboro's Empowerment Division. Mirtha oversees services that include anti-eviction, homelessness prevention, rehousing, workforce development, rental assistance and benefits access, and youth mentorship. Her leadership is the driving force behind RiseBoro's pursuit of excellence in social service provision, in which at all times she reinforces her dedication to a customer centered approach to all of staff, peers and clients.

- **William Spisak** is a lifelong New Yorker from Queens with a passion for housing and economic justice. For over a decade, he has worked as an organizer and advocate with immigrant and working class communities. For the last five years, Will served as the Director of Housing Justice at Chhaya Community Development Corporation and has recently taken a position as a Program Strategist with New Economy Project. He holds a Master's Degree in International Political Economy and Development from Fordham University and a bachelor's from CUNY-Queens College.
- **Anisha Steephen, Founder of Just Economy Lab**, an organization that advances public policies and initiatives centered in racial and economic justice. She is a strategic leader in community investing with over a decade of experience in successful multi-sector partnerships that drive capital to build assets for low-wealth communities. Anisha was previously the Interim Executive Director of Spaceworks NYC, a city-wide non-profit cultural workspace developer and operator. She serves on Manhattan Community Board 3 and the Fund for Public Housing. She is a first-generation American and lives in the Lower East Side.
- **Marlon Williams, Vice President of Public Policy and Collaboration at Philanthropy New York**, specializes in leading initiatives where success requires the mobilized coordination of stakeholders across agencies and sectors. Before joining Philanthropy New York, he served as the Assistant Director for Public Sector Innovation at Living Cities, working on projects to close racial gaps in income and wealth. At Living Cities, he was part of the Senior Leadership team, where he informed and influenced the organization's internal racial equity work and staff culture work.
- **Guy Yedwab, JD/MPAP Candidate at Rutgers Bloustein School of Planning**, ran a small theater company when the 2008 financial crisis propelled him into community organizing through the League of Independent Theater, an advocacy organization for small-sized theaters. As Managing Director, Guy led their work on union codes, endorsements in electoral campaigns, legislative advocacy, and social justice work. Guy is also a member of Brooklyn Community Board 6's Economic, Waterfront, Community Development & Housing Committee. He is now pursuing a J.D. degree and a Master's in Public Affairs and Politics from Rutgers University, where he recently received an Eagleton Fellowship in Politics and Government.

Eventually developing into actionable and scalable solutions, the agenda developed by the steering committee will chart a course for how low- and moderate-income communities and communities of

color can fully benefit from and shape economic growth and economic recovery from the pandemic. The agenda will be informed by priorities related to racial and social justice, education, infrastructure and transportation, poverty, gender, immigration services, climate and sustainability, and disabilities and accessibilities.

NYCETC, ANHD, and RPA will support NYCIGI's steering committee by producing original research, providing leadership and communications development, lending policy and issue expertise, and utilizing relevant connections to give the cohort access to government and civic organizations. The NYC Inclusive Growth Initiative is funded by the Ford Foundation, JPMorgan Chase & Co., and PNC Foundation.

More information on NYCIGI can be found here: <https://inclusivegrowth.nyc>.

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