

Keynote Speaker

Jacquelyn A. Suárez,

Acting Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs



In September 2023, Jacquelyn A. Suárez was appointed by Governor Phil Murphy to take on the role of DCA Acting Commissioner after the passing of Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver who also served as DCA Commissioner. Suárez also serves as Director of DCA's Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) as well as Chair of the State's Local Finance Board. In her role as DLGS Director, Suárez serves as an advocate for local government interests and provides them with technical and financial assistance in a number of areas – including joint services, purchasing, and management issues. She also oversees the review and approval of all municipal, county, and fire district budgets, works to uphold the financial integrity of local government units, and guides the conduct of local government officials.

Prior to serving as the Director of DLGS, Suárez provided legal advice to Governor Murphy on matters affecting his Administration as an associate counsel in the Governor's Office. During her time in the Governor's Office, Suárez advised on pending legislation, statutory responsibilities, litigation, the development of administrative regulations, and various proposals impacting the Governor's public policy agenda. With a focus on issues related to the Departments of Community Affairs, Human Services, Children and Families, and the Administrative Office of the Courts, Suárez was integral to advancing the Governor's agenda in these areas and, in particular, to spearheading many of the State's COVID response policies such as the eviction moratorium. It was Suárez's proven aptitude and successful track record that gave Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver the confidence to name her as the director of the DLGS.

Before joining the Governor's Office, Suárez was a legislative liaison, making her DCA's point person for all communication with the State Legislature. In this role, she drafted bill language, spearheaded the implementation of newly signed legislation at DCA, and helped review and advise on various decisions, orders, settlements, and other matters impacting the Department.



Mary Gay Abbott-Young
President, Rescue Mission of Trenton

Mary Gay Abbott-Young is the President of the Rescue Mission of Trenton, where she leads key aspects of the organization's strategic plan and oversees grants, funding, and public advocacy. An active advocate for those in need, Ms. Abbott-Young serves on several boards, including: Continuum of Care Executive Council Trenton/Mercer County; Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness; Mercer County Homeless Trust Fund; Mercer County Workforce Investment Board; New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies; New Jersey Coalition to End Homelessness; and Trenton Health Team.



Tarik Abdelazim
Director, National Technical Assistance

Tarik Abdelazim joined Community Progress in July 2014 and currently oversees the National Technical Assistance team. In this role, Mr. Abdelazim leads the delivery of a range of technical assistance and capacity-building services to urban, rural, and suburban communities across the country. He has helped communities design and launch innovative programming that have become models in the national field of practice, and has co-authored seminal publications on the land banking movement nationally and within New York State. Prior to joining Community Progress, Mr. Abdelazim completed eight years of public service in Binghamton, New York under two different executive titles in City Hall. For four years, he served as Deputy Mayor, leading high-priority interdepartmental teams, driving innovative IT/IM reform, and directing award-winning blight prevention initiatives, followed by nearly four years as Director of Planning, Housing and Community Development.



Abigail Alfred
Precision Solutions Manager, BCT Partners

Abigail Alfred is the Precision Solutions Manager at BCT Partners, where she manages, and champions projects dedicated to using data to foster equity and enhance community and organizational capacity. She leads multidisciplinary teams, overseeing the development and early implementation of Precision Solutions that leverage administrative data sets to create decision support tools for government agencies, philanthropic organizations, and nonprofits. Ms. Alfred is known for her ability to understand the unique needs of individuals, organizations, and communities, and uses a strengths-based approach to tailor projects accordingly. She is dedicated to ensuring that equity and real-life experiences are integrated into training, programs, and data analysis processes.



Dan Antonellis

President, Region Nine Housing Corporation

Dan Antonellis has served as President of Region Nine Housing Corporation (RNHC) since 2012, developing high-quality affordable housing and providing services to families, seniors and disabled individuals. Prior to becoming RNHC President, he served as a Staff Representative for the Communications Workers of America, Local 1038 and spent nearly 25 years at the New Jersey Department of Labor prior to that. He is a former Vice President and Board President of the ARC Mercer and a founding member of the Board of Orphan Sponsorship International (OSI). Mr. Antonellis joined the Network Board of Directors in 2018.



Olga Armas

Organizer, Make the Road NJ

Olga Armas is a community leader and organizer at Make the Road New Jersey, where she organizes immigrant families to fight for expanded rights and opportunities. Ms. Armas was instrumental in the campaign to win drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants, funding for excluded workers and leads MRNJ's Elizabeth tenant organizing work.



Martha Baez

Senior Vice President, Invest Newark

Martha Baez is the Senior Vice President of Land Banking Operations at Invest Newark. Prior to joining Invest Newark, Martha spent almost 16 years in the City of Newark, Department of Economic and Housing Development, under the Division of Property Management. She was responsible for real estate activities involved in the acquisition, disposition and/or management of city owned and/or leased properties.



Sharon K. Barker

Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, HCDNNJ

Sharon Barker brings over 35 years of non-profit experience across a broad range of community and national human service organizations. She is a Certified Fundraising Executive who has raised millions of dollars throughout her career. She has also served as a trainer and consultant for numerous non-profits with a focus on fundraising, capacity building, and planning. She has also served on many boards and advisory committees throughout

her career. Additionally, she has extensive experience as a Section 8 Housing Specialist and has worked with numerous communities in the areas of rental assistance, rental rehabilitation, housing rehabilitation, homelessness prevention, program development, and community development programs. As Vice President and COO of the Network, Ms. Barker is responsible for the daily operations of the organization, as well as fund development and the areas of training, program development and management, consulting, and technical assistance.



Staci Berger

President and Chief Executive Officer, HCDNNJ

As the President and CEO of the Housing and Community Development Network of NJ, Staci Berger directs the statewide association of over 275 community-based organizations and individuals, created to enhance efforts to create affordable housing, revitalize communities, and improve the climate for community development in NJ. She previously served as the Director of Advocacy & Policy, working to broaden and mobilize support for the Network's public policy agenda. Prior to joining the Network, Staci worked with New Jersey Citizen Action as an organizer and later as the Political and Legislative Director, devising and implementing political, legislative, and electoral strategy. She currently serves on the Economic and Community Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia and is a member of the Housing Advisory Council for the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. Representing the Network on Community Reinvestment Act Advisory Boards for both PNC Bank and Valley National Bank, and on TD Bank's Leadership Council, Staci assists these institutions in meeting community investment objectives.



Edward Bethea

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Gateway Community Action Partnership; Vice Chair, HCDNNJ Board of Directors

Edward Bethea serves as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Gateway Community Action Partnership. He oversees all financial, managerial and revenue-generating departments and activities within the agency. He is the chief negotiator of all contracts and leases and serves as chief developer on all construction projects. He is responsible for the Operations, Finance and Human Resources Departments as well as, Head Start, Health Services, Economic Development, Social Services, Information Technology, Weatherization, Property Management and Facility Maintenance. He brings years of experience in tax consulting, financial planning, cash flow projection and asset management to Gateway, and maintains approval authority on

all agency spending. He is also directly responsible for the interactions between Gateway and financial institutions and governmental entities.



Katie Brennan

Culture of Health Leader, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Katie Brennan is a Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Leader fellow where she works to create a silo-breaking government that works. She also serves as Executive Director of the New York State Office of Resilient Homes and Communities. In addition to helping to develop RHC's long-term goals, she is responsible for the achievement of RHC's mission of building resilient communities and adapting to climate change while also prioritizing environmental justice. She has more than fifteen years of expertise in housing and finance, urban planning, as well as legislative and policy initiatives to address historic housing and planning inequities. Ms. Brennan also spent three years at the helm of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency as Chief of Staff, where she administered its \$50 million operating budget and \$1 billion in annual investments in single and multifamily affordable housing production.



Susanne Byrne,

Chief Executive Officer, York Street Project

Susanne Byrne joined the York Street Project in her current role in 2009, but she is no stranger to its programs. With a one year hiatus, serving as the Homeless Planning Coordinator for Hudson County, she spent 10 years prior with The Project. She served as the Caseworker/Advocate for St. Joseph's Home from 2000 to 2008 and as the Assistant to the Director of The Nurturing Place from 1998-2000. Ms. Byrne is a member of the Hudson County Human Services Advisory Council, Hudson County Alliance to End Homelessness, the Hudson County Affordable Housing Coalition, the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey, and the Antipoverty Network of New Jersey. Within these groups, she serves on a variety of Executive Boards and sub-committees advocating for the poor.



Julio Colon

Director of Real Estate Development and Management, Essex County Urban League

Julio Colon has over 40 years of experience in senior leadership roles working for municipalities, nonprofit institutions, public benefit corporations, community economic development organizations in New York City, Newark, New Jersey and Baltimore, Maryland. Currently, Mr. Colon oversees all real estate development projects for ULEC OC and provides daily construction management during the project's construction period. He served as President & CEO of LC Homebuilder for

several years building affordable 2 & 3 family homes in Newark, East Orange and Jersey City. Mr. Colon maintains a wealth of knowledge and experience to navigate complex programmatic economic and housing development operations. As a hands-on Community Developer, he has designed and executed effective public policies to improve and revitalize urban communities creating thousands of units of housing, community facilities and infrastructure improvements through strategic initiatives in real estate finance and development, neighborhood planning, affordable housing production and commercial revitalization.



Susan Catlett

NRTC Program Manager, NJ Department of Community Affairs

After decades of honing project management, customer service, and process improvement skills in the private sector, Susan Catlett developed expertise in grant program administration at the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Joining the NJ Department of Community Affairs in 2021 resulted in the discovery of Ms. Catlett's new-found passion for community development. She strives to streamline processes and provide grantees with the support, information, and training required for efficient, effective grant management. The NRTC program is at work in over 30 neighborhoods across the state; transforming not only the neighborhoods but the lives of those who live, work and play there.



Celmira Cordero

Tenant Organizer, New Brunswick Tomorrow

Celmira Cordero began her career at New Brunswick Tomorrow as a volunteer with Project Esperanza, a project is focused on the rehabilitation of New Brunswick's Esperanza neighborhood involving local residents. Her approach as a tenant organizer stems from her own experiences struggling to find a decent affordable home. As an immigrant from Peru, reMs. Cordero's experience has led her to focus on educating immigrants on tenants' rights. She is proud to be part of the New Brunswick Tomorrow Tenant Association efforts to have new ordinances enacted in the City of New Brunswick that regulate abuses and illegal charges as well as reinforcing compliance. Education about tenants' rights is a fundamental part of providing the community with a defense tool since many families do not have access to legal representation in court in the event of eviction.



Dean Dafis

Mayor of Maplewood Township, Attorney, Director of the Office of Eviction Prevention, Division of Housing and Community Resources, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

Dean Dafis is an attorney with lived experience in eviction & homelessness who is the Director of the Office of Eviction Prevention in the Division of Housing and Community Resources of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA). He oversees best practices in eviction prevention including a statewide expanded access to counsel pilot initiative to defend low-income residents facing eviction and the integration of diversion in landlord-tenant courts throughout the state via experienced case workers who act as resource navigators to tenants facing eviction.



Nina DePalma

Staff Attorney, Volunteer Lawyers for Justice

Nina DePalma is a staff attorney who works on VLJ's Tenancy Program. Connected with her efforts on behalf of tenants in New Jersey, Ms. DePalma is a fellow with the New Jersey Housing Justice Corps. In Summer 2023, she will be an adjunct law professor teaching landlord, tenant, and housing law at Rutgers Law School. While in law school, she founded the Newark Housing Rights Coalition, a program that matches law students with eviction defense volunteer opportunities in Newark. Also during law school, she interned with VLJ and Northeast New Jersey Legal Services. When not at VLJ, Ms. DePalma volunteers with DASI, a nonprofit based in Sussex County that provides comprehensive resources for victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking.



Amanda Devecka-Rinear

Executive Director, NJ Organizing Project

Amanda Devecka-Rinear is a fourth-generation Cedar Bonnet Island resident with more than 20 years' experience in community organizing and strategic leadership. Formed after Superstorm Sandy in 2014, NJRP and NJOP have redirected hundreds of millions of dollars in disaster aid to keep working families in their homes and continue to work to shift our broken disaster recovery systems to ensure full and fair disaster recovery. Prior to co-founding the two Projects in 2015, Amanda was the National Campaign Director for National Peoples' Action.

Ms. Devecka-Rinear began her career as Program Director for New York City PoliceWatch, part of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. She was a founding board member of FIERCE and the recipient of a Union Square Award in 2003 for work around criminal justice in NYC. She was part of city-wide student organizing to successfully

preserve in state tuition, and thus access to public higher education for Immigrant New Yorkers.



Kimberly Goycochea

Housing Counselor and Paralegal, The Waterfront Project

Kimberly Goycochea is a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor and Paralegal with The Waterfront Project. She previously worked in city government during the COVID-19 pandemic and has used the knowledge of city and county processes during a disaster to assist her clients and give them real expectations and guidelines with receiving assistance, while also helping to explore all available avenues of resolution, assistance and empowerment. During Hurricane Ida, she assisted clients in getting relocation dollars, replacing lost documents and inform tenants about their rights.



Nada Hussein

ERASE Project Coordinator, National Low Income Housing Coalition

Nada Hussein is project coordinator with the End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions (ERASE) team. In this role, Nada works to advance the Coalition’s mission and ensure that the historic emergency rental assistance appropriated by Congress reaches the lowest-income and most marginalized renters. Prior to joining NLIHC, she worked with the North Carolina League of Municipalities, where she crafted training programs and drafted reports on homeownership, inequality, and poverty to educate local elected officials about ways to close the Black and Hispanic homeownership gap across the state. She also worked with the North Carolina Justice Center, conducting research into how local governing bodies across the state could use the funds received from the “American Rescue Plan Act” to support renters at risk of eviction.



Zoila Jennings

Lead Investment Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Zoila Jennings joined the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2021, bringing her career focus on social justice and poverty alleviation—through targeted community financing—to her work as an impact investments officer. Previously, Ms. Jennings served as senior relationship manager with U.S. Bank, the fifth largest commercial bank in the United States, as part of its Community Development Corporation. In this role she sourced, structured, and underwrote loans and equity investments to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). She also developed and executed investment initiatives to help

address racial inequities, including a \$25 million fund to support women of color microbusiness owners and the first CDFI-issued racial equity bond for targeted investments in underserved communities of color.



Barbara George Johnson

Vice President of External Affairs and Urban Policy and Research, Kean University

Barbara George Johnson has been nominated by President Joe Biden as a member of the board of trustees of the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Foundation. At the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, she oversees the work and mission of the New Jersey Urban Mayors

Association, a unique organization of 32 urban mayors engaged in collective policymaking. The Institute focuses on urban environmental policy, public health policy, early childhood policy, and instruction in leadership development and civic engagement. Johnson has an extensive background in health care, public health and public policy. Early in her career, she spearheaded the development of the Newark Kids Initiative for the Newark Health Department. She also served on the CDC-funded Newark Prevention Marketing Initiative and other task forces on HIV/AIDS.



John P. Keller

Director of Education and Outreach, coLAB Arts

John Keller was born and raised in the City of New Brunswick and works in NYC and internationally as a freelance actor. Through his work at coLAB Arts, he is committed to creating projects that use the arts as a lens to examine complex issues that affect community. While serving as Director of Education for coLAB Arts, he has produced main-stage productions and initiated educational residencies in

several central New Jersey schools. Mr. Keller curates and directs coLAB Arts' Trueselves oral history and theater project in partnership with the Pride Center of New Jersey and Rutgers Oral History Archive. He is also the Board Chair for New Brunswick's Town Clock Community Development Corporation. He has taught theater courses at all grade levels in a variety of residency programs as well as at Rider University, Westminster Choir, Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts, and Fairleigh Dickinson University.

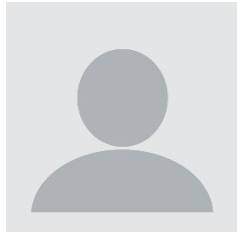


Taiisa Kelly

Chief Executive Officer, Monarch Housing Associates

Taiisa Kelly joined Monarch Housing Associates in March of 2006. She has experience in housing development working with federal, state and local funding sources to secure financing for special needs housing projects. In October of 2007, Ms. Kelly joined the Ending Homelessness Team where she works with local governments,

nonprofits and community stakeholders to develop coordinated strategies to end homelessness. On January 1, 2019, she was appointed as CEO. She has extensive experience in working with community stakeholders on homeless planning activities. As a member of the Ending Homelessness Team Ms. Kelly guides communities through the process of developing 10 year plans to end homelessness and has completed 3 community plans in the past 2 years.



Xin "Leo" Li

Program Specialist, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

Xin "Leo" Li is the Program Specialist for the Lead Assistance Programs within the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs', Division of Housing and Community Resources, Office of Lead Prevention. Mr. Li has been dedicated to administering lead-based paint hazard reducing programs for the last 9 years and has been a part of reducing lead-based paint hazards from more than 1,600 homes all across New Jersey. He has also simultaneously assisted the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) within the Office of Low Income Energy Conservation (OLIEC) in a variety of different capacities to promote the goal of creating lead-safe and energy efficient housing.



Lorissa Luciani

Administrator, Housing Production Unit, Division of Housing and Community Resources, NJ Department of Community Affairs

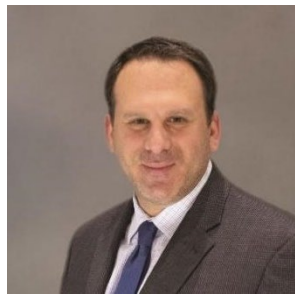
Lorissa Luciani, PP, AICP is currently the Administrator for the Housing Production Unit within the Division of Housing & Community Resources at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJDCA). Prior to her role as the Housing Production Administrator, Ms. Luciani was the Director of Planning & Code Enforcement for West Deptford Township and the Director of Community Development in Cherry Hill Township, where in both communities she oversaw the management of local construction permitting and zoning, property management, code enforcement, affordable housing production and land use administration. A licensed planner in New Jersey and with the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), Ms. Luciani also has served the American Planning Association – New Jersey (APA-NJ) Chapter for the last 13 years in various roles. She has also served as Vice President of the New Jersey Smart Growth Alliance and currently serves as a Board Member for the Rowan University Community & Environmental Planning Advisory Board.



Tina McGill

*Program Manager, Office of Homelessness Prevention (OHP) NJ
Department of Community Affairs, Division of Housing and
Community Resources*

Tina has a decade of experience successfully assisting individuals and families to prevent and to resolve housing barriers. Her career includes developing, operationalizing, and or monitoring programs such as Rapid Re-Housing, State Rental Assistance Program, Housing Choice Voucher, Youth Transitional Housing, and much more. Currently, Ms. McGill's role in the Office of Homelessness Prevention (OHP) is to assist in the development of a statewide strategy to address homelessness. Through the Community Led Planning Development (CLPD) initiative over the past year, she invited people with lived experience (PWLE) to have an active voice in addressing homelessness. She also manages the Homelessness Diversion Pilot grant at OHP, using housing problem-solving and financial assistance to prevent (and rapidly exit) households from homelessness. Ms. McGill also spearheaded the Housing First Expansion (HFE) initiative at OHP and has delivered and increased number of landlord relationships, the development and expansion of the MyResource and MapMe Apps and strengthened partnerships among stakeholders.



Jordan Moskowitz

*Managing Director of Single Family Division, NJ Housing and
Mortgage Finance Agency*

As Managing Director of Single Family Programs, Jordan Moskowitz is responsible for all elements of residential mortgage lending for the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency. This includes oversight of NJHMFA's Down Payment Assistance programs, Mortgage Revenue Bond program, Mortgage Backed Securities program and Seller/Service relationships with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. His areas of responsibility include business development, mortgage fulfillment and loan servicing. Over the past five years, Mr. Moskowitz and his team have successfully sourced, reviewed and purchased over 9,000 Down Payment Assistance loans and the accompanying first mortgage loans. Mr. Moskowitz also oversees the Emergency Rescue Mortgage Assistance Program (ERMA) under the federal Homeowner Assistance Fund. To date, \$104 million in mortgage assistance has been committed through the ERMA program, and almost 3,800 households who had fallen behind on their mortgage or related property expenses have received direct financial assistance to bring their mortgage and property taxes current.



Bridget Phifer

Executive Director, Parkside Business & Community In Partnership; Chair, HCDNNJ Board of Directors

Bridget Phifer has served as Executive Director of Parkside Business and Community in Partnership (PBICP) since 1999. Since joining PBICP, she has grown the organization's budget tenfold. Staff has increased from one (Ms. Phifer) to half a dozen staff as the housing effort has expanded, and homeownership education, marketing and neighborhood planning programs have been created. Strategic partnerships with foundations, other community development organizations, corporations and government agencies have been critical to this success. Ms. Phifer has previously served on the Network Board of Directors as Vice Chair.



Louis Prezeau

Director of Housing Counseling and Community Investments, HCDNNJ

Responsible for the Network's housing counseling efforts, along with neighborhood revitalization efforts. Louis is a community economic development professional with extensive banking, finance, and development experience including both the development and underwriting functions of affordable housing. Louis has also overseen the creation, management, and administration of client focused, culturally competent housing counseling programs and managed community development programs that addressed issues such as neighborhood revitalization, pandemic response, workforce development, disconnected youth, adult basic education, entrepreneurship, disaster recovery, and business improvement districts. Prior to joining the Network, Louis worked at La Casa de Don Pedro in Newark, NJ where as Director of Community and Economic Development he worked to revitalize the Lower Broadway community's physical and social environment through affordable housing development, community planning and organizing, and a community focused housing counseling program.



Alle Ries

Community Reinvestment Act Officer, M&T Bank

Alle Ries is the Regional Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) Officer for M&T Bank. In this role, she serves as a liason between the bank and community-based organizations throughout NJ to develop and administer creative initiatives that meet the needs of low- to moderate-income individuals and their families. Prior to joining the bank, she served as the Director of Community & Economic Development and Director of Program and Fund Development at La Casa de Don Pedro. She joined the Network's Board of Directors in 2018.



Alex Rivera

Director of the Center for Economic and Workforce Development, Innovation, and Social Entrepreneurship, Watson Institute

Alex Rivera was appointed the Director of the Center for Economic and Workforce Development, Social Entrepreneurship, and Innovation at the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University in November 2021. In this role, he leads the administration of a US Economic Development Administration University Center grant, which calls Kean to deploy its resources to support economic development in New Jersey's urban communities. He previously worked with the Watson Institute on creating a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, also funded by the US Economic Development Administration, from 2014 to 2016. Mr. Rivera is the Chair of the Outdoor Equity Alliance, Garden State Preservation Trust, and Green Energy and Infrastructure Committee of the Newark Workforce Development Board.



Leonard Robbins

Senior Program Officer for Lending, Local Initiatives Support Corporation

As the new Senior Program Officer for LISC's Greater Newark Office, Leonard Robbins' role is to help frame, from and drive their overall lending strategies and has over 40 years of experience in the community development field. Prior to joining LISC he served as the Director of Real Estate Project Management at the Urban League of Essex County, leading their property acquisition, rehabilitation and neighborhood redevelopment work in the Fairmount Heights Neighborhood of Newark. He has experience as a private developer, contractor and construction manager in New Jersey and Brooklyn. Mr. Robbins previously served as the Director of Training and Technical Assistance for the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey.



Wanda Saez

Senior Vice President, Social Impact and Sustainability – Public Affairs, Wells Fargo

Wanda Saez is the Senior Vice President, Social Impact and Sustainability – Public Affairs for Wells Fargo. She is a Community Relations Professional specializing in CRA, Philanthropy and Community Development. She joined Wells Fargo in 2000 as Vice President – Government and Community Relations. In May of 2017 she was promoted to Senior Vice President, Corporate Responsibility and Community Relations. In the 24 years that Ms. Saez has been with Wells Fargo she has worked closely with the non-profit community throughout New Jersey.



Carol Sainthilaire

Executive Director, The Waterfront Project, Inc.

As the current Executive Director of The Waterfront Project, Inc., Carol M. Sainthilaire is at the helm of an organization dedicated to providing free civil legal representation and assistance to New Jersey residents who are asset-limited, income-constrained, homeless, or disenfranchised. She is a distinguished leader in the fields of nonprofit management, housing policy, and community development. With a career spanning over a decade, she has consistently demonstrated her commitment to creating meaningful change in communities through her strategic leadership and programmatic expertise.



Jaymie Santiago

President and Chief Executive Officer, New Brunswick Tomorrow

Jaymie Santiago has been working for the progress of New Brunswick's residents since 2004. He began his work with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension and was instrumental in creating a citywide network of Food Hubs consisting of farmers markets and community gardens. In 2009, Mr. Santiago served on the initial planning committee that developed the New Brunswick Community Food Alliance. And in 2011, he was the Co-Director of Rutgers Against Hunger, a university-wide initiative offering temporary relief to families faced with hunger across New Jersey. He joined New Brunswick Tomorrow as Director of Operations in 2012. He managed the Healthier New Brunswick initiative; designed to improve the overall health of city residents. Later, he became Vice President for NBT and Co-Director of the New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids-NB to develop environmental and policy strategies that prevent childhood obesity. In July of 2016, Mr. Santiago became President of New Brunswick Tomorrow.



Maisha Simmons

Senior Director of New Jersey Grantmaking, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Maisha Simmons' work at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is dedicated to helping New Jersey be a healthier place to live, work, and play. She joined the Foundation in 2008 as a program associate working to support advocacy efforts to combat childhood obesity. Since then, she has been responsible for coordinating a variety of RWJF programs to promote healthy eating and active living, violence prevention, family supportive policies, and health equity. Ms. Simmons has been recognized for her work in philanthropy through various leadership and advisory roles, including with the Executives' Alliance for Boys and Men of Color and as an Association for Black Foundation Executives (ABFE) Fellow. In 2015, Simmons received the Emerging Leader Award from ABFE.



Renae Smith

Director of Development, Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless

Renae Smith is the Director of Development at Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless, an organization that provides homes for the unhoused and housing insecure. She has worked at the Coalition for over 10 years. She holds a masters degree in Actuarial Science and Insurance from St. Johns University in New York. Ms. Smith is an international award-winning author who has written and published 10 books.



Helen Steblecki

Community Reinvestment Act Officer, OceanFirst Bank; HCDNNJ Board Member Emeritus

Helen Steblecki is CRA Officer for OceanFirst Bank, which has been serving communities in Central and South Jersey for 121 years, and more recently Manhattan, the Bronx and Westchester, and Philadelphia. With 25 years+ experience in financial services and community development, Ms. Steblecki oversees banking regulatory requirements, as well as partners with nonprofits to develop, implement, and support innovative solutions addressing issues faced by low- and moderate-income individuals; including programs focused on affordable housing, financial inclusion, asset building and entrepreneurship. Ms. Steblecki moved to Emeritus status in January 2020.



Laura Sullivan

Director of Economic Justice, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

Laura Sullivan is the Director of Economic Justice at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, where she leads the Institute's work to promote a more equitable and inclusive economy in New Jersey. Previously, she was a policy researcher at the Institute on Assets and Social Policy focusing on understanding racial wealth disparities and the financial well-being and vulnerabilities of U.S. households.



The Hon. Britnee N. Timberlake
NJ Assembly, Legislative District 34

In 2018, Britnee N. Timberlake was sworn-in to serve as a member of the New Jersey General Assembly, representing the 34th Legislative District, comprised of Clifton, East Orange, Orange, and Montclair. She serves as Chair of the Commerce and Economic Development Committee, Vice Chair of the Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee, and serves on the Joint Committee on Housing Affordability. Assemblywoman Timberlake is no stranger to public service. From 2015 to 2017, she served as President of the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders representing District 3 – East Orange, Orange, South Orange Village, and parts of Newark. In addition to her public office career, Timberlake is the founder of the Essex Community Land Trust, a nonprofit organization that provides permanent, affordable housing and financial empowerment opportunities for working class families throughout Essex County. She previously served as an AmeriCorps Member in Union County and housing chair of the Montclair NAACP.



Judith Thompson-Morris
Deputy Director, LISC Greater Newark

Judith Thompson-Morris has been a vital member of the Greater Newark LISC team for over 20 years, currently serving as the program's Deputy Director. As the chief underwriter, she is responsible for underwriting over \$20 million loans and grants that facilitated the development of over 1,300 affordable housing units and 370,000 commercial/community facilities space. Currently Ms. Thompson-Morris oversees the office's lending and real estate investment activities and other programmatic activities/strategies including its Community Capacity Building and Resident Power Building program, Economic Development programs including its Income and Wealth Building efforts and its local AmeriCorps program. She is also responsible for leading the office's technical assistance efforts directed to the Community Development Corporation partners in its portfolio. A planner by training, Ms. Thompson-Morris has worked previously for the City of Jersey City as a Senior Planner in the Planning Department and Project Manager with the City's Affordable Housing Division.



Edward Ubiera
Northeast Region Director for Public Engagement, JPMorgan Chase

Edward Ubiera is JPMorgan Chase's Northeast Region Director for Public Engagement. In this role, he helps oversee engagement with local nonprofit, advocacy, and other community leaders in an eight state region to drive community-centered

impact and foster dialogue to inform our CRA, grantmaking, and business initiatives. He has over 20 years of experience across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in various positions where he guided strategy for government and legislative initiatives, provided credit oversight for public infrastructure bond financings, helped oversee federally funded housing and economic development programs, and more.



Richard Uniacke
President, Bridges Outreach

Richard Uniacke is the President at Bridges Outreach, located in both Summit and Newark, NJ, and has been working to end homelessness since joining in May of 2018. Bridges currently serves both Essex and Union Counties, providing Street Outreach services, including nightly outreach in Newark, case management focused on exits from homelessness and prevention of imminent homelessness, and causing good trouble in the name of those most vulnerable neighbors among us. Prior to joining Bridges, Richard worked on food insecurity for 17 years while working for the Community FoodBank of New Jersey in myriad roles.



Mark Valli
CEO, Norwescap

Mark Valli is the CEO for Norwescap, a well-established community action agency, providing a wide variety of programs and services to over 30,000 low-income individuals and families in the 5 Northwest counties of the State. Previously, Mr. Valli served as CEO for the Community Charter School of Paterson (CCSP). CCSP was founded as a community school serving over 900 students K-8 in Paterson, New Jersey, the State's third-largest city, and one of its poorest. Mr. Valli led a change management process that transformed a struggling school into a school demonstrating steady academic progress for its students including 9.8% gains in math and 11.4% gains in ELA between 2015 and 2017.



Melanie Walter
Executive Director, NJ Housing & Mortgage Finance Agency

Melanie R. Walter brings broad-ranging experience in government and community-related matters in New Jersey state government to her role as Executive Director of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA). Before joining NJHMFA in January 2021, Ms. Walter previously served as Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Director of the Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) And Former Deputy Attorney General. In the role of DCA Director of the DLGS and Local Finance Board Chairwoman, she advocated for local government interests, revitalizing the Division's supportive initiatives and developing grant programs while overseeing the financial and operational regulation of New Jersey

local units to help ensure fiscal solvency. Through these functions, she championed transparency measures as well as expansive open data and local education programming and enhanced local procurement, municipal officer certification, and distressed municipality resources. More recently, Ms. Walter has developed and implemented numerous COVID-19 response and recovery measures.



Janel Winter

*Director of Housing and Community Resources, New Jersey
Department of Community Affairs*

Janel Winter directs the work of the Division of Housing and Community Resources at the Department of Community Affairs. The Division has more than 300 staff and 14 field offices and a portfolio ranging from administration of rental assistance to the Office of Eviction Prevention to housing production funds and much more. Since the start of the pandemic the Division has administered more than \$2 billion in Covid-related assistance funds, including launching, and implementing the \$500 million Eviction Prevention Program and distributing more than \$750 million in Emergency Rental Assistance Program Funds to more than 80,000 households. Over the past year more than 120,000 households have received rental assistance and more than 300,000 households have received utility assistance through the Division's programs.