

# ADVOCATES' GUIDE AUTHORS

## Andrew Aurand

Andrew Aurand is senior vice president for research at NLIHC, where he leads the research team in documenting the housing needs of low-income renters in annual publications like *The Gap* and *Out of Reach*, conducts additional research that informs housing policy related to extremely low-income renters, and co-manages the National Housing Preservation Database. Before joining NLIHC, Andrew was a faculty member in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University, where he taught housing policy and research methods and completed research on the impact of comprehensive planning on the supply of affordable housing. He holds a master's degree in social work and a PhD in public policy from the University of Pittsburgh.

## Rusty Bennett

Russell "Rusty" Bennett, LGSW, Ph.D., is chief executive officer of Collaborative Solutions. He has more than 20 years of experience in nonprofit organizations and government and an extensive background working with HUD programs, including the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In addition to serving as a liaison with HUD's Office of HIV/AIDS Housing (OHH), Rusty is currently executive director of the Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama and executive director of the Professional Association of Social Workers in HIV & AIDS, following the appointment of Collaborative Solutions as management agent for the two organizations. He is also principal investigator on Collaborative Solution's research/evaluation projects, including the Professional Association of Social Workers in HIV & AIDS's initiative "Age Positively," for which he leads the HIV and Aging Task Force, serves as faculty for the HIV & Aging curriculum, and chairs the national conference. Along with PhD and LGSW degrees, he holds a certification in diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace from the University of South Florida.

## Steven Berg

Steve Berg is chief policy officer at the National Alliance to End Homelessness. In his role overseeing the policy-related work of the Alliance, he works to end homelessness by promoting effective public policies and local practices regarding housing, employment, and human services. He came to the Alliance from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), where he worked on state-level welfare reform and employment. Before joining CBPP, he spent 14 years as a legal services attorney in California and Connecticut, working on housing, government benefits, employment, and family integrity issues. His background includes nonprofit management and staff training and development.

## Sidney Betancourt

Sidney Betancourt is a project manager of inclusive community engagement on NLIHC's racial equity team. Before joining NLIHC, Sidney was the 2020-2021 Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) housing graduate fellow. During her time as a fellow, Sidney worked with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness on legislative research aimed at preparing the agency for a governance restructure. She spent the last half of her fellowship with the House Committee on Financial Services' Subcommittee for Housing, Community Development and Insurance. As a committee fellow, Sidney supported staff in drafting important legislation related to public housing, infrastructure, and homelessness. Sidney is a graduate of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she earned a bachelor's degree and an MSW. During her field placement as a social work student, she worked at a homeless outreach agency in downtown Las Vegas, collaborating with a legal aid agency to quash unjust warrants for individuals experiencing homelessness.

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## Kanav Bhagat

Kanav Bhagat is the founder and president of Housing Risk and Policy Advisors LLC, a consulting and advisory firm that provides strategic advice on housing policy and mortgage risk to lenders, policymakers, and consumer advocacy groups. His analysis and recommendations have influenced the mortgage underwriting, refinancing, and modification policies of various Government agencies. He is currently working as a consultant to the Center for Responsible Lending. Previously, Kanav was a Research Director for the JPMorgan Chase Institute, where he led a team using the administrative data of JPMorgan Chase & Co to conduct housing finance and financial markets research designed to help policymakers, business leaders, and non-profit decision makers make more informed policy choices. While at the JPMCI, he developed and executed a research agenda focused on mortgage underwriting, performance, modification, and refinancing, as well as monetary policy transmission mechanisms and central bank communication. Prior to engaging in policy-related research, Kanav spent 17 years as a trader in various fixed income markets. Most recently, he served as the Global Head of Interest Rate Trading at J.P. Morgan, where he managed a global team of 150 traders who were responsible for the trading, risk management, and capital management of Government securities and interest rate swaps, options, and exotics in G10 interest rate markets.

Kanav earned a BS in Electrical Engineering from Cornell University and an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

## Juliana (Jules) Bilowich

Juliana Bilowich (they/them) is a prominent advocacy and policy expert at LeadingAge, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing innovative housing and healthcare solutions for older adults. At LeadingAge, Juliana works to advance housing affordability for older adults with extremely low incomes as they age in community. Juliana plays a critical role in integrating community-based services and climate-informed preservation strategies within housing

policies, focusing on the unique needs of older adults and promoting inclusive housing practices.

## Kayla Blackwell

Kayla Blackwell serves on the policy team as a senior housing policy analyst. Before joining NLIHC, she worked in the office of Senator Ben Ray Luján (D-NM), where she covered housing and homelessness. Prior to working for Senator Luján, Kayla was a field representative in the office of former Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM), where she advocated for the needs of rural communities and Tribal governments at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Kayla's legislative career started in the Texas Capitol as a health policy fellow in Representative Garnet Coleman's office. Kayla holds a master's degree in social work with a specialization in political social work from the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. She holds a bachelor's degree in social work from New Mexico State University.

## Samantha Booth

Samantha Booth is a seasoned professional in government affairs with a diverse background in public policy and legislative support. Currently serving as the Government Affairs Manager at the Housing Assistance Council since January 2019, Samantha previously held roles including Public Policy Director at the Community Development Bankers Association and Legislative Aide for Senator Heidi Heitkamp. Additional experience includes positions as a Legislative Correspondent for multiple senators, a Communications Intern at the American Enterprise Institute, and various writing and editorial roles at The Onion and the Bozeman Daily Chronicle. Samantha holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Northwestern University, specializing in Journalism, History, and International Studies.

## Victoria Bourret

Tori Bourret is NLIHC's project manager for state and local innovation. In her previous role, as ERASE senior project coordinator, Tori worked with NLIHC's ERASE team to advance the Coalition's mission and ensure

that the emergency rental assistance appropriated by Congress reached the lowest-income and most marginalized renters. Before joining NLIHC, Tori served as communications and project manager at the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, a state partner of NLIHC, providing management and outreach assistance for policy campaigns and specialized projects and managing all communications, including social media, the organization's newsletter, and the website. She also served two terms in the AmeriCorps, one with AmeriCorps NCCC in Denver, Colorado and the other with Public Allies in Delaware. Tori holds a BA in women's studies and psychology from the University of Delaware and an MSW from the University of Pennsylvania.

## Jen Butler

Jen Butler is vice president of external affairs at NLIHC. In this role, she works with the NLIHC chief executive officer to lead all the organization's departments and activities that are externally facing, including: communications, media relations, brand, public relations, fund development, and events. Jen's past work in marketing and communications has included management of a diverse portfolio of campaigns for both local and national brands in the entertainment, media, and non-profit sectors. Jen is a graduate of Georgia State University, where she earned a BA in journalism with a concentration in public and political communications.

## Alayna Calabro

Alayna Calabro is a senior policy analyst at NLIHC, where she works to identify, analyze, and advocate for federal policies that address the urgent needs facing low-income renters and people experiencing homelessness. Alayna previously worked at NLIHC as a field intern while completing her graduate studies. As a case manager intern with Catholic Charities, Alayna witnessed the detrimental effects of housing instability on her clients' well-being and became interested in the broader systems that impact access to safe and affordable housing. She holds an MSW degree with a concentration in community action and social policy

from the University of Maryland and a BA in English and psychology from the University of Notre Dame.

## Michael Calhoun

Mike Calhoun has over 30 years of experience working to expand sustainable and affordable housing. He has worked collaboratively with the nation's lenders and others in the mortgage finance system to broaden the range of responsible mortgage products for working families. For the past 15 years, he has served as president of the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL), helping secure safe mortgage requirements to prevent a recurrence of the patterns and behaviors that led to the 2008 housing crash and recession. Before joining CRL, he led home lending programs and compliance at Self-Help, one of the nation's largest community development lenders. He has served as an advisor to housing developers providing low-cost rental housing for seniors and families and has worked to protect homeowners facing foreclosure due to predatory loans. He also worked for several years as a legal aid attorney, including as lead counsel in one of the first environmental justice cases, successfully preventing the destruction of a 100-year-old Black community to make way for the construction of a planned freeway. He serves on numerous boards and financial advisory groups, including as a member of the Board of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and as a member and chair of the Federal Reserve Board Consumer Advisory Committee. Mike holds a BA in economics with honors from Duke University and a JD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

## Allie Cannington

Allie Cannington is Managing Director of Advocacy at The Kelsey, where they lead efforts to advance disability-forward housing solutions at state and federal levels, ensuring that policy changes are co-led by diverse and marginalized disabled individuals. With over 15 years of experience, Allie has organized people with disabilities on local, state, and national levels, centering those who experience multiple forms of oppression. Allie is also a proud board member at the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Ultimately, Allie's work is dedicated to unveiling everyone's proximity to disability

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and fueling justice movements that are intersectional, sustainable, and intergenerational.

## Billy Cerullo

Billy Cerullo is a housing advocacy organizer on NLIHC's field team. In this role, Billy helps grow the Coalition's network of advocates and supports efforts to strategically engage federal policymakers on key policy priorities. Billy has been working as an organizer for almost a decade and has organized winning campaigns to change education and healthcare policies. Before joining NLIHC, he organized multiple unionization drives as an organizer for the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA).

## Sharon Cornelissen

Sharon Cornelissen is the director of housing for the Consumer Federation of America (CFA), where she advocates on behalf of American consumers for fair, affordable housing and equitable mortgage lending. She brings over a decade of experience as a housing researcher, and her work has been widely featured in the media and published in reports and academic journals. Prior to CFA, she worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies, where she published research briefs and advocated to address contemporary housing discrimination in Massachusetts. During her Ph.D. in Sociology from Princeton University, she lived in the Brightmoor neighborhood of Detroit for three years and first-hand observed the challenges of homeowners amid neighborhood decline. She recently published a book based on her work, called "The Last House on the Block: Black Homeowners, White Homesteaders, and Failed Gentrification in Detroit."

## Joanna Cuevas

Joanna Cuevas is a senior staff attorney at the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), where she champions the rights of low-income immigrant youth, workers, and families through community-centered impact litigation, administrative advocacy, and policy initiatives. Admitted to practice in California and New York,

Joanna is a litigator who brings significant due process, equal protection, and civil rights impact litigation experience to NILC. She currently addresses equal access to representation, deferred action for immigrant workers, health and economic justice, and challenges to discriminatory law enforcement policies, practices, and executive orders.

## Ben D'Avanzo

Ben D'Avanzo leads NILC's federal health advocacy and language justice work. He works with Congress, executive branch agencies, national stakeholders, and community organizations to advocate for immigrants' access to health care and healthy lives. His focuses include expanding immigrants' access to public support programs, strengthening language access civil rights, and defending against attacks on immigrant families. He authors fact sheets and reports, leads advocacy coalitions, and devises strategies while working with partners and policymakers. Ben has a master's degree in public administration from George Washington University and a bachelor's degree in political science from American University.

## Lindsay Duvall

Lindsay Duvall is a senior housing advocacy organizer at NLIHC. In this position, Lindsay helps the field team engage advocates on federal policy priorities to advance the Coalition's mission and expand NLIHC membership. She has an extensive background in emergency and affordable housing programs, having worked for eight years with NLIHC member Hudson River Housing in Poughkeepsie, New York. As manager of advocacy and community engagement, she crafted outreach strategies, developed partnerships, managed resident leadership initiatives, supported communications projects, and expanded the agency's advocacy work. Prior to this role, Lindsay worked on outreach and volunteer mobilization with the Oregon Food Bank. She holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Cincinnati and a master's degree in educational leadership and policy from Portland State University.

## Dan Emmanuel

Dan Emmanuel is director of research with NLIHC. He has worked in a range of housing and community development contexts since 2008 with a particular focus on program evaluation and community needs assessment. Dan earned a BA in philosophy and psychology from the College of William & Mary and an MSW with a concentration in community and organization practice from Saint Louis University.

## Thaddaeus Elliott

Thaddaeus Elliott is housing advocacy coordinator at NLIHC. He works with the Coalition's field team to expand membership and engage advocates in efforts to advance federal policy priorities. Before joining NLIHC, Thaddaeus completed a policy fellowship with the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ (UCC) in its Office of Public Policy and Advocacy in Washington, D.C. As a fellow, he educated and mobilized UCC churches and their members from all over the country to advocate on Capitol Hill for the denomination's policy priorities relating to environmental justice, criminal justice reform, racial justice, and civil rights.

## Antonia Fasanelli

Antonia Fasanelli serves as the executive director of the National Homelessness Law Center.

Previously, she was executive director of the Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP), a Maryland-based civil legal aid organization committed to changing the systems that contribute to poverty and homelessness. During her thirteen-year tenure at HPRP, she incubated innovative civil legal aid projects providing legal assistance to all persons experiencing homelessness, including youth and veterans—as well as systemic initiatives to decriminalize homelessness and advance policies to end homelessness, all by lifting the voices of persons most affected by homelessness. Ms. Fasanelli received her J.D. magna cum laude from the Washington College of Law, American University in 2001 and her B.A. cum laude from Barnard College, Columbia University in 1996. From 2001 to 2002, Ms.

Fasanelli was a law clerk to The Honorable Barefoot Sanders of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas. Prior to law school, Ms. Fasanelli was an Americorps\*VISTA Outreach Coordinator at the Law Center.

## Emily Fischbein

Emily is senior project manager at Collaborative Solutions. She and her multi-talented teams assist communities throughout the U.S. with successfully operating and braiding their various funding sources to provide housing and support services for low-income people with HIV, disabilities, and other special needs. Her work reaches a large audience through national webinar presentations and conference lectures. A graduate of Columbia University (AB) and the University of Pennsylvania (master of city planning), Emily has practiced numerous areas of urban planning throughout her career so far, with an emphasis on the intersection of people and place.

## Kody Glazer

Kody Glazer is the chief legal and policy officer at the Florida Housing Coalition, where he leads the organization's legal strategy and statewide policy initiatives. He provides technical assistance to local governments, elected officials, developers, and community organizations on regulatory reform, land use, funding mechanisms, and innovative approaches to expanding affordable housing. Kody also directs the Coalition's policy design and housing affordability advocacy work, including coordinating the Sadowski Affiliates network. An experienced drafter of state legislation and local housing ordinances, he brings a deep understanding of the legal frameworks that shape housing policy in Florida. Kody graduated magna cum laude from the Florida State University College of Law and serves as an Adjunct Professor in the FSU Department of Urban and Regional Planning.

## Ayana Dilday Gonzalez

Ayana Dilday Gonzalez is a senior consultant at the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc (TAC). She has over 20 years of experience in policies and practices

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related to affordable housing development and supportive housing. She has worked in private and public sector affordable housing development and in public sector health and human services. Ms. Gonzalez is an expert in the design, financing, implementation, and evaluation of publicly funded supportive housing programs and provides training and facilitation for housing providers, service agencies, and state and local governments on supportive housing expansion and fidelity. She has extensive knowledge of federal and state programs used to finance housing and services for low-income and vulnerable populations, including the Section 811 PRA program, the Continuum of Care (CoC) program, and the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. Ayana holds a BA from Smith College and a MA in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts University.

## Sarah Goodwin

Sarah Goodwin is a policy and advocacy manager at the National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH), where she supports the organization's policy- and capacity-building work and manages the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition. She previously served NCHH as a policy intern, helping establish and run the "Find It, Fix It, Fund It" lead elimination action drive and its associated workgroups. She holds a BA in interdisciplinary studies: communications, legal institutions, economics, and government from American University.

## Ed Gramlich

Ed Gramlich is a senior adviser at NLIHC. After joining the Coalition in 2005, Ed spent his first two years staffing NLIHC's RegWatch Project, an endeavor to expand the Coalition's capacity to monitor federal regulatory and administrative actions, with a focus on preserving the affordable housing stock, both public and assisted. Between 2007 and 2010, he was NLIHC's director of outreach. Since 2010, he has served as senior advisor, overseeing the Coalition's efforts related to affordable housing regulations and providing expertise on regulations related to the national Housing Trust Fund and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing. Before joining NLIHC, he worked for 26 years at the Center

for Community Change (CCC), where his primary responsibility was providing technical assistance about CDBG to low-income, community-based groups. While at CCC, Ed also devoted considerable time to providing technical assistance to groups concerned about the negative impacts of UDAGs in their communities. Ed holds a BS and an MBA from Washington University.

## Grounded Solutions Network

Grounded Solutions Network supports strong communities from the ground up by furthering housing solutions with lasting affordability and inclusionary housing policies to advance racial and economic equity. Grounded Solutions is a national nonprofit membership organization of over 260 community land trusts, nonprofits, inclusionary housing government programs, and allies located in 46 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico, all supporting the creation and preservation of housing with lasting affordability. The Network provides its members and the broader field with training, technical assistance, policy and program design, resources, research, and advocacy. Grounded Solutions champions evidence-based policies and strategies that work and promotes housing solutions that will stay affordable for generations so communities can stabilize and strengthen their foundations for good.

## Brittni Gulotty

Brittni Gulotty is the housing project coordinator with the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence. She is a community organizer, social justice advocate, and policy enthusiast whose work focuses on sustainable systems change, equitable policy development, innovative solutions, and centering the voices of survivors. Brittni has led local, state, and national campaigns, scaled program capacity, coordinated survivor working groups, and trained hundreds of volunteers. She has an MA in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies with a concentration in public policy and health equity from the University of Albany.

## Maya Hamberg

Maya Hamberg is a policy analyst for the Innovations in Manufactured Homes (I'm HOME) Network and the Accelerating Community Investment Initiative at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Maya has worked in several research areas aligned with Lincoln Institute's program areas. As a research assistant for the Tufts Economic Department faculty, Maya aided in research that aimed to quantify the economic impact of the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) for its participants. Additionally, she completed a research internship with Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth (MassINC) on transformative transit-oriented development, specifically looking at how the decentralized workplace could be leveraged to spur development in Massachusetts's Legacy Cities. Maya is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of Tufts University, holding a B.A. in Quantitative Economics with a focus in Urban Studies.

## Elena Hampton-Stover

Elena Hampton-Stover, LMSW, serves as the director of housing at the National Network to End Domestic Violence. Elena began her career in gender-based violence movement work in college and has over a decade of professional experience in residential and housing programs serving survivors. Prior to joining NNEDV, she was the Director of Community Technical Assistance and Capacity Building at Collaborative Solutions, a national technical assistance provider and member of the Safe Housing Partnerships Technical Assistance Consortium. She gained much of her experience in housing work while administering and building a number of housing programs including emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and survivor coordinated entry at a local direct service organization in the Baltimore area. She is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of the University of Arkansas, holding a BA in Social Work and African and African American Studies and holds her MSW from University of Kansas. She is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society.

## Melissa Harris

Melissa Harris serves as government affairs director for the American Association of Service Coordinators, where she leads the organization's legislative and regulatory advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels. She also promotes recommended standards of practice for service coordinators and provides technical assistance and training on service coordination fundamentals and policies. A special focus of her work is on empowering service coordinators to undertake grassroots advocacy efforts. She holds a journalism degree from Kent State University and worked as a news reporter for more than a decade before joining AASC in March 2018.

## Cristy Villalobos Hauser

Cristy Hauser is the housing policy director with the National Housing Research Center. Before joining the Center, she worked at the North Carolina General Assembly for three legislative sessions, receiving an award of appreciation for public service. She began her advocacy work as a CSW fellow for WomenNC in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she advocated for the health rights of women who are incarcerated at the local and state levels. Later, she directed and coordinated operations to help elect more than 20 public officials in Virginia over three election cycles. While working in local elections, she also helped advocate for affordable housing in Virginia's Fairfax County. She is motivated to strengthen the housing counseling industry to help underserved communities, communities of color, the elderly, and low- and moderate-income individuals. She holds a BA in political science from Meredith College and a master's degree in public management from Johns Hopkins University.

## Kevin Hill

Kevin Hill is a senior policy advisor at NCRC. His work focuses on the Community Reinvestment Act, both federal and state, as well as climate change. He is passionate about policy advocacy and organizing to increase the political and economic power of those affected by redlining and systemic discrimination. He

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has worked for NCRC since 2014. He also previously worked for the Greenlining Institute and has a Master's Degree in Political Science from San Francisco State University.

## Nada Hussein

Nada Hussein is a research analyst with NLIHC's State and Local Innovation 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.

Nada received her undergraduate degree in political science and sustainability studies from the University of Florida. She holds a master's degree in public policy from the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University, where she concentrated in social policy.

## David Jacobs

David Jacobs is chief scientist at the National Center for Healthy Housing. He also serves as an adjunct associate professor at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Public Health and faculty associate at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He is one of the nation's foremost authorities on childhood lead poisoning prevention and was principal author of the President's Task Force Report on the subject in 2000 and the Healthy Homes Report to Congress in 1999. He has testified before Congress and other legislative bodies and has authored or coauthored many peer-reviewed publications. Dr. Jacobs is the former director of the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, where he was responsible for program evaluations,

grants, contracts, public education, enforcement, regulation, and policy related to lead and healthy homes. His current work includes research on asthma, international healthy housing guidelines, lead poisoning prevention, and green sustainable building design. Dr. Jacobs is a Certified Industrial Hygienist® and holds degrees in political science, environmental health, technology, and science policy, as well as a doctorate in environmental engineering.

## Kimberly Johnson

Kimberly Johnson senior director of policy at NLIHC, where she is responsible for identifying, analyzing, and advocating for federal policy and regulatory activities related to NLIHC's policy priorities. Her work at the Coalition focuses on the housing protections included in the "Violence Against Women Act," criminal justice reform, and evictions. Before joining NLIHC in 2019, Kimberly earned her master's degree in public policy from George Washington University. During her graduate program, she interned with Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future and with the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. She also held a fellowship with the National Network to End Domestic Violence. Before graduate school, Kimberly resided in Harrisonburg, Virginia, working as an advocate for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. In 2014, she served on an advisory committee to the Obama Administration's White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. She received her BS in psychology and an MA in psychological sciences from James Madison University.

## Mark Kudlowitz

Mark Kudlowitz is a senior policy director with the Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC), where he advocates for federal policies that support the organization's national priorities, including affordable housing, rural development, community development financial institutions, and sustainable development. Before joining LISC, Mark was policy director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Multifamily Housing Programs and worked for more than seven years at the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund at the U.S. Department of

the Treasury. Mark also managed affordable housing and community development programs at the District of Columbia's Department of Housing and Community Development and held multiple positions at the Housing Assistance Council, a national rural affordable housing organization. Mark earned his BA from the University of Florida and a master's degree from the University of Michigan.

## Jennifer Kye

Jennifer Kye is director of federal housing advocacy at Justice in Aging and focuses on reducing housing insecurity and homelessness among low-income older adults. She works to improve access to deeply affordable, accessible, community-based housing that allows older adults to age in place with the supports they need. She also co-chairs the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) Housing Task Force. Jenny's advocacy is informed by the eight years she spent in direct legal services representing older adults and people with disabilities in cases involving fair housing, eviction defense, Medicaid (including Home and Community-Based Services), and income supports such as SSI.

Jenny was formerly a supervising attorney at Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (CLASI) in Delaware and helped lead the program's fair housing and public benefits work. Before her time at CLASI, she was a staff attorney at the Pennsylvania Health Law Project and Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, where she also served as a Borchard Fellow in Law & Aging. Jenny received her BA and JD from the University of Virginia.

## Sherry Lerch

Sherry Lerch is a director with the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc (TAC). She has more than 40 years of experience working in the behavioral health system at both the county and state levels. In her role at TAC, she provides technical assistance to community organizations and state/local governments on services and supports that meet the needs of individuals with mental health, substance use, and co-occurring disorders; justice system involvement; or who are without homes. She also provides technical

assistance relating to holistic care for individuals with high risks/high needs; Olmstead compliance; inter-agency and cross-systems approaches; and effective strategies for garnering local adoption of best and promising practices. Her areas of expertise include systems assessment, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, group facilitation, program development, and financing strategies. Examples of her work include conducting systems' assessments and developing recommendations to address gaps in services to incorporate into Olmstead Plans for Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, and North Carolina that contributed to the preventable institutionalization and incarceration of individuals with behavioral health disorders in Washington State; coordination work with state agencies and counties on the development and implementation of an array of crisis intervention services and funding strategies; and facilitating an analysis of housing support services that involved identifying and engaging partner agencies needed to address gaps and barriers in Arizona, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington State.

## Marcella Maguire

Marcella Maguire is director of health systems integration at the Corporation of Supportive Housing (CSH). Her work focuses on the intersection of the housing and healthcare sectors in the financing, policy, and implementation of systems and programs. She has engaged in efforts in multiple states regarding the use of Medicaid and health policy levers to build equity in communities and address community needs. Prior to joining CSH, Marcella worked for 17 years for the City of Philadelphia leading efforts to integrate behavioral health, managed care, and affordable and supportive housing systems. She holds a PhD in clinical psychology.

## Lisa Marlow

Lisa Marlow serves as the director of communications at NLIHC. In this role, she oversees the implementation of NLIHC's communication strategies, managing communication plans, media relations, and public relations to enhance the organization's visibility and outreach. Prior to rejoining NLIHC, Lisa worked at the Urban Institute, where she led strategic communications

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for the Housing and Communities division. In this position, she identified long-term communication opportunities related to research in housing finance, homelessness, community development, and climate change.

## Meghan Mertyr

Meghan Mertyr is a disaster housing recovery analyst, supporting NLIHC's Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition in all communications, outreach, and advocacy. Before joining NLIHC, Meghan worked as a community organizer at the New Jersey Organizing Project (NJOP) and the New Jersey Resource Project (NJRP), where she built and mobilized a base of more than 1,000 people impacted by Hurricane Ida from across the state to advocate for the passage of legislative and administrative solutions addressing damage caused by the hurricane.

## Blythe McWhirter

Blythe McWhirter (she/her) serves as federal affairs associate for the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC), where she supports the council's federal policy agenda and supports its advocacy on Capitol Hill. She assists in shaping legislative strategy, managing congressional outreach, and coordinating with partners across Tribal, federal, and nonprofit sectors to advance shared housing priorities. Blythe also contributes to the planning of NAIHC's national gatherings and policy discussions, ensuring Tribes and TDHEs have meaningful opportunities to engage with federal officials and influence housing policy at the local, state, and federal levels. She received her B.A. in political science from Haverford College.

## Melina Milazzo

Melina Milazzo is the director of public policy for the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV). In this role, Melina leads the policy team to advance federal legislation and policies to provide resources and services for survivors as well as address root causes of gender-based violence. She helped pass the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women

Act (VAWA) of 2022, Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (which partially closed the "boyfriend" loophole), and the Victims of Crime Act Fix. She led U.S. civil society efforts with the White House to inform the development of the first-ever U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. She also led NNEDV's legal advocacy efforts in the Supreme Court case U.S. v. Rahimi. Prior to joining NNEDV, Melina worked for over a decade conducting federal government relations, legislative and policy advocacy, coalition building, and communications work on a range of human and civil rights and social justice issues. Melina received her J.D. with high honors in international law from Florida State University College of Law and her B.S. in business administration from the same university.

## Valencia Moss

Valencia Moss is a seasoned event strategist and public relations professional with over 15 years of experience producing national and international conferences. As Senior Organizational Learning & Event Specialist at Collaborative Solutions, she leads large-scale events and advocacy initiatives that advance housing, social work, and public health policy. Valencia holds a Master's in Corporate Communications, is a Certified Meeting Planner (CMP) and Digital Event Specialist (DES) and is recognized for delivering mission-driven experiences that inspire action and impact.

## National American Indian Housing Council

The National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) is the unified voice for Tribal housing across Indian Country. Since 1974, NAIHC has advanced Tribal self-determination and worked to improve housing conditions by supporting Tribes, housing authorities, and Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs). Through legislative advocacy, training and technical assistance, and membership services, NAIHC helps our 275 members, representing nearly 500 Tribes and tribal housing organizations, build strong communities while ensuring Tribal priorities remain at the center of federal housing policy.

## National Preservation Working Group

The National Preservation Working Group (PWG) is a diverse coalition of national advocacy organizations, housing owners, developers, tenant associations, and state and local housing agencies dedicated to the preservation of multifamily housing for low-income families. The PWG serves as a trusted and unified voice of housing organizations and is known for advancing practical, actionable solutions. Members of PWG come together to advance solutions that tackle big challenges through advocacy around resources and legislation that can support the preservation of affordable housing.

## Samira Nazem

Samira Nazem is a managing director for access to justice at the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). Samira works with courts around the country to help increase access to justice for people without lawyers and oversees the Eviction Diversion Initiative (<https://www.ncsc.org/our-centers-projects/eviction-diversion-initiative>), an \$11 million grant program which supports state and local courts in designing, implementing, and evaluating eviction diversion programs and related court reform efforts. Her work also includes providing technical assistance to courts in areas including process design and improvement, communications and outreach strategies, delivery of self-help services, and other court reform efforts.

Prior to joining NCSC, Samira worked on a wide range of efforts to improve access to justice and to expand the range of available self-help, legal aid, and pro bono resources as the Associate Director of Programs & Advocacy at The Chicago Bar Foundation. Samira began her legal career working in legal aid as an eviction defense attorney and is passionate about improving the administration of justice in eviction court. A proud native of Omaha, Nebraska, Samira now lives in Chicago with her husband and two daughters.

## Libby O’Neil

Libby O’Neill is senior policy analyst with NLIHC. As a member of our policy team, Libby draws on her background in state and federal housing finance to focus on federal affordable housing policy and housing supply. Libby began her career at Florida Housing Finance Corporation, where she initially specialized in multifamily green building policy. Subsequently, she was an administrator of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, in which role she gained in-depth knowledge of affordable housing development. She also worked in the multifamily business at Fannie Mae, conducting research and shaping policies and strategies that address the needs and challenges of renters. Libby holds a master’s degree in social work from Florida State University, with a focus in social policy.

## Noah Patton

Noah Patton is a manager of disaster recovery with NLIHC. Before he joined the Coalition, Noah worked at the Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP), helping to advocate for policies to expand public benefit programs and protecting Housing Choice Voucher holders. After working as a campaign and state house staffer in Maryland, Noah received a JD from the University of Baltimore School of Law. While in law school, Noah was involved in coordinating Legal Observers of the National Lawyers Guild to protect the legal rights of Baltimore-area political protestors and served as a Kellogg’s Law Fellow at the NAACP Office of the General Counsel, working on transit equity and educational policy. Noah received his BA in political science from McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland. He has been a member of the Maryland Bar since 2018.

## John Pollock

John Pollock is a staff attorney for the Public Justice Center who has served since 2009 as coordinator of the National Coalition for the Civil Right to Counsel (NCCRC). The NCCRC works in 47 states at the state and local levels to establish the right to counsel for civil cases involving basic human needs such as child

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custody, housing, safety, mental health, and civil incarceration. He is the recipient of the 2018 Innovations Award from the National Legal Aid and Defender Association (NLADA) and the 2025 Earl Johnson Equal Justice Award from the Western Center on Law and Poverty. He graduated from Northeastern University School of Law, where he was a recipient of a Public Interest Law Scholarship (PILS). He is the author of many law review articles, including “Appointment of Counsel for Civil Litigants: A Judicial Path to Ensuring the Fair and Ethical Administration of Justice” (<https://tr.ee/ykkVuo>) (Court Review, 56.1 2020) and Right to Counsel for Tenants Facing Eviction: Justifications, History, and Future, (<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/ulj/vol51/iss5/4/>).

## Monica Reid

Monica L. Reid is a skilled director of policy and advocacy with over 18 years of professional experience providing public affairs coordination, advocacy, and consulting focused on social justice issues. She currently services as director of advocacy and government affairs at the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA). Prior to joining NFHA, Monica furthered her advocacy and policy expertise as Senior Director of Advocacy at the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, where she oversaw the organizations state legislative criminal justice reform efforts, and the day-to-day grassroots advocacy operations. In 2019, Monica was appointed by then Governor Ralph Northam to serve on Virginia’s inaugural African American Advisory Board where she served as Co-Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Criminal Justice. Monica is a graduate of George Mason University with a master’s in public administration and a B.A. in government & international politics and economics. She is also a graduate of the Minority Political Leadership Institute, a collaborative initiative of the Grace E. Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University and the Legislative Black Caucus.

## Benja Reilly

Benja Reilly is a development specialist with NLIHC, helping ensure the Coalition secures the necessary resources to support its mission. Before joining NLIHC, Benja served as Lead Caseworker and Burial

Assistance Coordinator for Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington, where he assisted clients with long-term support and self-help. He has also conducted research and planned events with Gallaudet University and the Central American Resource Center as a legal intern. He received his undergraduate degree in religion from Carleton College with a minor in Spanish.

## David Gonzalez Rice

David Gonzalez Rice is NLIHC’s Senior Vice President of Public Policy. In this role, David provides strategic direction for NLIHC’s federal advocacy, advancing policies and programs that promote accessible and affordable housing for all, as well as equitable federal disaster response and recovery. David brings extensive experience with federal policymaking, systems improvement, and program delivery across housing and human services sectors.

## Dee Ross

Dee Ross is NLIHC’s first tenant leader fellow. An Indianapolis native, Dee took the initiative at the age of 24 to establish The Ross Foundation to address the absence of youth programs and basic needs in his community. His commitment to combating racial inequities and poverty led him to found Indiana’s first tenant rights union in 2017, extending aid to over 5,000 residents. Continuing his commitment to social change, he became a co-founder in 2020 of the Ross Legacy Fund, a family philanthropy dedicated to supporting Black-led social change initiatives.

## Brooke Schipporeit

Brooke Schipporeit is director of field organizing at NLIHC. Previously, Brooke spent years supporting state and local coalitions in their efforts to achieve solutions to housing poverty. She worked as an MSW intern with the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, informing and mobilizing coalition members to advance equitable housing policy. She also worked as Philadelphia’s regional housing coordinator for the Self-Determination Housing Project of Pennsylvania, focusing on expanding affordable and accessible housing options for people

with disabilities and older adults. Before her career in affordable housing, Brooke worked in direct services in Nebraska for both the Head Start program and a domestic violence shelter. She earned a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Science degree in social work from Nebraska Wesleyan University.

## Colby Sledge

Colby Sledge is local policy principal at Grounded Solutions Network, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the creation and preservation of housing with lasting affordability. Colby has assisted states and localities in creating and implementing affordable housing policy with Grounded Solutions since 2023 and has worked to secure public funding for shared equity models such as community land trusts. Prior to joining Grounded Solutions, Colby served two four-year terms as a Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County (Tenn.) Councilmember, where he focused on affordable housing and served as the Council appointee to the city's affordable housing trust fund. Colby's career has spanned journalism, public relations, and editorial direction, with an emphasis on local campaigns and movements to create healthy, welcoming communities. He serves as Vice Chair of the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency and is based in Nashville. He holds a master's degree in civic leadership from Lipscomb University.

## Lisa Sloane

Lisa Sloane is a senior policy advisor and manages complex consulting projects for state and federal government agencies at the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc (TAC). She has nearly 40 years of experience working with federal, state, and local governments, as well as nonprofit agencies, to address the supportive housing needs of people with disabilities and individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Lisa has worked with the states of Virginia, Massachusetts, Oregon, Louisiana, and Maryland to develop and implement permanent supportive housing programs for people with disabilities and people experiencing homelessness. In Massachusetts, she played a key role in the

development of innovative cross-disability housing programs, including a housing locator system, a state housing bond fund, and a state home modification loan program. She is an expert in the area of fair housing. Before joining TAC, Lisa was principal of Sloane Associates, a woman-owned business that provided affordable housing and human services consultation, specializing in the development of housing programs and policies for persons with disabilities, including those experiencing homelessness.

## Carolyn Smith

Carolyn A. Smith brings over a decade of multi-sector strategic communications and advocacy experience across non-profit, corporate, and public settings. With her passion for community and skills in storytelling, she helps organizations find their voice and own their narratives. As the vice president of strategic communications at Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF), she works closely with her team of communications and policy experts to amplify the organization's work and leadership as a community development financial institution centering racial equity, and advocate for more equitable resources in LIIF's priority areas. Carolyn is a graduate of Howard University in Washington, D.C., where she earned a bachelor's degree in journalism with a concentration in public relations and a minor in political science. Carolyn is based in her hometown of Atlanta.

## Mitria Spotser

Mitria Spotser is the vice president and director of federal policy at the Center for Responsible Lending. She previously served as director of housing policy at the Consumer Federation of America and as a member of the consumer advisory councils for JP Morgan Chase, Rocket Mortgage, Wells Fargo, Bank of America, and Freddie Mac. Mitria also previously served as senior director of advocacy and counsel at the Credit Union National Association; senior counsel on the House Financial Services Committee for Chairwoman Maxine Waters; vice president of federal policy and senior counsel at the Center for Responsible Lending; director of legislative and policy advocacy at the National Community Reinvestment Coalition; director of

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government affairs for the DC Housing Finance Agency; and legislative director and acting committee director for the Committee on Economic Development for the Council of the District of Columbia.

As a noted expert in issues involving affordable housing, economic development, consumer protection, access to credit and capital, housing finance, and oversight of financial institutions, Mitria and her work have appeared on CNBC, MSNBC, Bloomberg News, NPR, and C-SPAN. She has also published in law journals, law reviews, and editorial publications and has testified before both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. In 2014, Mitria appeared on the cover of *Housing Wire Magazine* as a “Woman of Influence” in recognition of her development of the affordable housing compromise in the bipartisan Corker-Warner housing finance reform legislation.

## Liz Stewart

Liz Stewart has 20+ years of experience in policies and practices related to affordable housing development and permanent supportive housing. She has helped States, local governments, and housing and services agencies navigate local and federal regulations and restrictions in order to maximize resources to support PSH. She has extensive knowledge of federal and state programs used to finance housing and services for low-income and vulnerable populations including the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program, the Housing Choice Voucher program, Special Purpose Vouchers, the 811 Project Rental Assistance program, and the Continuum of Care program. Ms. Stewart also has extensive experience underwriting and evaluating financial feasibility of affordable housing developments including the use of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, the National Housing Trust Fund, and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program.

## Makenzie Sumners

Makenzi is currently the national policy manager at the Low-Income Investment Fund (LIIF) in Washington, DC. In her role she advances federal policy efforts related to affordable housing, early care and education, and impact-led investing with the goal of creating equitable

access to economic opportunity. Prior to LIIF, she was a policy advisor for Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Colman (D-NJ) where her legislative portfolio included economic and racial justice policy issues. Makenzi has also worked in research and program evaluation as a Research Manager at University of Chicago’s Urban Labs and a Research Assistant at MDRC. She earned her Master’s of Public Policy from Duke University and her B.A. in Political Science and Urban & Community Studies from the University of Connecticut.

## Eric Tars

Eric Tars serves as senior policy director with the National Homelessness Law Center, leading the development, oversight, and implementation of the Law Center’s policy advocacy agenda to cultivate a society where every person can live with dignity and enjoy their basic human rights, including the right to affordable, quality, and safe housing. Before joining the Law Center, Eric was a fellow with Global Rights’ U.S. Racial Discrimination Program and consulted with Columbia University Law School’s Human Rights Institute and the U.S. Human Rights Network. He is a Fellow with PolicyLink’s Spatial Futures Initiative. Eric received his JD as a Global Law Scholar from the Georgetown University Law Center and his BA in political science from Haverford College. He also studied international human rights at the Institute for European Studies, Vienna, and at the University of Vienna.

## Karly Toledo

Karly Toledo (she/her) is a Diné Asdzáán, a member of the Navajo Nation, and a narrative and culture change strategist with a background in intergovernmental affairs, storytelling, and multiracial coalition building. She is a graduate of Smith College with a B.A. in government and minor in economics. Karly is an experienced political organizer with a demonstrated history of working at the federal level and in Native-led nonprofit organizations. Her previous experience includes serving as special assistant for the Office of Indian Energy Policy & Programs at the U.S. Department of Energy and participant in the Native American Political Leadership Program (NAPLP) at The George Washington University. Born and raised in Northern

Utah, Karly has a deep love and respect of the natural world and is deeply honored to work with the National American Indian Housing Council.

## Tia Turner

A housing advocacy organizer with NLIHC's field team, Tia Turner works to expand membership and engage advocates in federal policy priorities to advance the Coalition's mission. Before joining the field team, Tia interned on NLIHC's policy team while completing her master's degree. During the 2020 elections, she worked to educate and mobilize unhoused residents in Huntsville, Alabama, witnessing several encampment closures and seeing first-hand the negative impact of the closures on the unhoused community, an experience which led her to become a zealous advocate for housing justice.

## Michelle Uzeta

Michelle Uzeta is the executive director of the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) and a nationally recognized expert in disability and fair housing law. With more than 30 years of experience as a disability rights attorney and movement leader, Michelle has helped shape the landscape of accessible and equitable housing through precedent-setting litigation, strategic policy advocacy, and deep partnership with communities most affected by discrimination. Michelle has litigated landmark cases under the "Fair Housing Act," the "Americans with Disabilities Act," Section 504, and related civil rights statutes, advancing protections for tenants with disabilities across the country. Her work has strengthened housing accessibility standards, expanded reasonable accommodation and modification rights, and challenged policies and practices that disproportionately impact people with disabilities—particularly those at the intersections of race, poverty, and other systemic barriers. A frequent lecturer and writer on disability and fair housing law, Michelle has authored publications, provided national training to advocates, and submitted amicus briefs to the United States Supreme Court. She is a graduate of Stanford University and earned her Juris Doctor from the University of California, Davis School of Law.

## Olivia Wein

Olivia Wein is a senior attorney at the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC). NCLC is a non-profit focused on using consumer law to promote economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people. Olivia focuses on policies and programs that protect low-income consumers' access to essential utility services, including energy, water, and telecom. She works on the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Weatherization and Lifeline, and she intervenes in federal and state utility commission proceedings in matters affecting low-income utility consumer programs and protections. She is co-author of the fifth edition of NCLC's manual *Access to Utility Service* and co-author of *The Rights of Utility Consumers*. Olivia serves on the board of the Universal Service Administrative Company and the governing board for the National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition.

## Ruth Anne White

Ruth White is one of the nation's leading experts on the nexus between housing policy and child welfare. She is co-founder and executive director of the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare and former director of housing and homelessness for the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). At the Child Welfare League, she co-edited a landmark issue of the League's journal, *Child Welfare*, documenting the extent to which children are needlessly held in foster care because their parents lack decent housing. Through her advocacy, more than \$100 million in new funding for the Family Unification Program has been made available for families and youth in child welfare since 2009. Prior to working at CWLA, Ruth managed the front-door family shelter and redesigned the homeless coordinated entry system in Columbus, Ohio, reducing shelter entries by over 60%. She is also certified as an assisted housing manager. Ruth has a Master of Science degree in social administration from Case Western Reserve University and a Bachelor of Science degree in social work from Ohio State University. She is currently a Furfey Scholar, doctoral candidate, and professor of social work at the Catholic University of America.

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## Chantelle Wilkinson

Chantelle Wilkinson is the national campaign director of the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign at NLIHC. Before joining the Coalition, she worked as a budget analyst for the New York State legislature, assisting with the enactment of housing and transportation policies. In 2016, she worked on the Breathing Lights Campaign with the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society. The campaign highlighted the issues of dilapidated vacant housing in the capital region of New York State and spurred collaboration between people and organizations from many sectors, including artists, community organizations, neighborhood ambassadors, project administrators, and government officials. Chantelle received her BA in political science with minors in Latin American/Caribbean studies and Spanish and her MA in public administration from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany.

## Renee Williams

Renee Williams is NLIHC's senior advisor for public policy. In her role, Renee monitors and assists NLIHC's response to regulatory, legislative, and other developments that impact the ability of people with the lowest incomes to access and remain in affordable homes. Previously, Renee worked at the National Housing Law Project (NHLP) and the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). At NHLP, Renee's work focused on advocacy to preserve, strengthen, and promote fair housing protections; the housing rights of survivors of domestic and sexual violence; and housing access for persons with limited English proficiency. During her nine years at NHLP, Renee provided training and technical assistance to a range of audiences across the United States. Renee also drafted legislative language, evaluated and commented on proposed regulations, and contributed to NHLP's HUD Housing Programs: Tenants' Rights (the "Green Book"). At DOJ, Renee worked to implement and enforce federal civil rights protections. Renee graduated with a B.A. from Emory University and a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School.

## Renee M. Willis

Renee M. Willis is president and CEO of NLIHC, a membership organization dedicated to achieving racially and socially equitable public policy that ensures people with the lowest incomes have quality homes that are accessible and affordable in communities of their choice. She also leads NLIHC's intensified engagement of renters with low-incomes and people with lived experience with homelessness and housing instability. Renee previously served as NLIHC's senior vice president for Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. In this role, Renee worked to ensure that NLIHC's commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion is woven through its culture, policies, programs, and practices. From 2015 to 2021, Renee served as NLIHC's vice president for field and communications. In 2020, she served as a fellow with the Shriver Center's Racial Justice Institute and joined a network of advocates working on race equity issues across the country.

## Tiara Wood

Tiara Wood is NLIHC's communications coordinator. Tiara provides essential support to NLIHC's Communications, Events, and Development teams, focusing on the areas of social media, visual storytelling, content creation, event planning, media relations, and marketing. Before joining NLIHC, Tiara was senior program associate of communications for the National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA), where she played a vital role in increasing the national impact of the organization by deploying a strategic communications plan, boosting social media engagement, and managing onsite teams in support of national events. She also worked for Star Eyed Events, where she designed and developed a brand identity for the organization's fan conventions and improved its communications strategy via social media channels. Tiara earned her bachelor of arts degree in political science from Furman University, while also playing on the university's Division I basketball team.

## Alicia Woodsby

Alicia Woodsby is a senior associate at the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc (TAC). She has 17 years of experience leading statewide public policy initiatives; building statewide coalitions and cross-system and cross-sector partnerships; developing housing and services solutions for vulnerable and complex populations; and working to scale best practices. She provides technical assistance (TA) to states, nonprofits, local community mental health agencies, and Continuums of Care on health, behavioral health, and housing integration strategies; data sharing; estimating needs for housing resources; supportive housing capacity-building; strategies to reduce homelessness; serving high-cost/high-need populations; homelessness prevention; racial equity strategies; and partnering with people with lived experience. She served on the team for a national Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) learning collaborative focused on leveraging Medicaid and other federal resources to serve individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs) experiencing homelessness, and she has contributed

to national policy briefs and planning guides. She has conducted multiple presentations on mental health policy, housing, and homelessness at the state level and nationally. Prior to joining TAC, Alicia was the executive director of the Partnership for Strong Communities, the statewide policy, advocacy, and backbone organization for the collective impact effort to end homelessness in Connecticut. At the Partnership, she led the statewide Reaching Home campaign, which played a major role in Connecticut's being named the first state to end chronic homelessness among veterans and the second to meet the federal definition of ending veteran homelessness, while reducing chronic homelessness among all populations by more than 60%. These efforts resulted in a substantial increase in the state's stock of supportive and affordable housing and a streamlined system for addressing the long-term homelessness of people with disabilities. During her time as public policy director for the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Connecticut, she led a statewide mental health advocacy coalition, taking the lead on issues related to Medicaid, medication access, mental health parity, housing, and the decriminalization of serious mental illness.

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*Many links and resources may have been changed or removed from federal websites before this guide was finalized. As a response, this guide provides full URLs to support your web-based research. Please utilize a web archival tool like <https://archive.org> to view links that may not currently be working and research any recent changes and funding cuts to ensure that you have the most current information.*

*Please contact [outreach@nlihc.org](mailto:outreach@nlihc.org) with any questions.*