



EAST

Speaker Biographies

The Costs of Affordable Housing

Friday, 4:45pm

Cory Fellows is vice president of real estate development for Preservation of Affordable Housing. He focuses on the acquisition and redevelopment of affordable multifamily properties. His work includes acquisition targeting, feasibility analysis, financial and regulatory structuring, and development oversight. He has more than 20 years of affordable housing experience, and has managed the preservation and revitalization of at-risk housing assets throughout the country, involving a wide array of financing programs and regulatory environments.

Nandini Natarajan is chief executive officer – executive director of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the state level housing finance agency in the State of Connecticut. Nandini is the first woman and first person of color to serve as CEO in the organization’s history. Prior to joining CHFA, Ms. Natarajan was the chief financial officer of the Illinois Housing Development Authority for six years where she oversaw all aspects of the Authority’s financial plans and policies, including the issuance of tax-exempt private activity bonds, loan securitization and secondary market activities. Ms. Natarajan has served on the National Council of State Housing Agencies board of directors since 2020 and is a member of the Federal Home Loan Bank Boston Advisory Council.

Brandon L. McGee, Jr., was named deputy commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Housing in March 2023. McGee has been actively involved in the political arena for two decades. Most recently he served as political director for the second-term governor of Connecticut, Ned Lamont. Previously, he served as a Connecticut state representative for District 5 from 2013 to 2022.

Sean Ghio joined the Partnership for Strong Communities as policy director in 2017. He leads the Partnership’s statewide advocacy efforts on affordable housing where he plays a public leadership role. Ghio provides overall management for the HOMEConnecticut Campaign which aims to increase the stock of affordable housing in Connecticut. He is responsible for overseeing the Partnership’s research, analysis, and housing policy recommendations.

Welcoming Remarks

Friday, 6:45pm

Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno was appointed the commissioner of housing by Governor Ned Lamont in 2019 and re-appointed for his second term in 2023. As commissioner, Seila directs the lead state agency for housing matters for the State of Connecticut. The Department of Housing is responsible for all aspects of housing policy including the development, redevelopment and preservation of housing and neighborhoods. Since her 2019 appointment, Seila has developed partnerships with financial institutions as well as service providers, advocates, and nonprofits, while serving as the board chair of the CT Housing Finance Authority (CHFA), Connecticut's quasi-public organization dedicated to financing the production and preservation of rental housing and homeownership. Under Seila's leadership, the Department of Housing has distributed \$500MM for the preservation and production of 13,000 affordable units.

Keynote Address: Building More Housing for Better Affordability

Saturday, 8:35am

Andrew Aurand is senior vice president for research at National Low Income Housing Coalition. He leads NLIHC's research team in documenting the housing needs of low-income renters in annual publications such as *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. He holds a master's degree in social work and a PhD in public policy from the University of Pittsburgh.

Fireside Chat with Governor Ned Lamont

Saturday, 12:45pm

Governor Ned Lamont was sworn into office as the 89th governor of Connecticut on January 9, 2019. He began his second term on January 4, 2023. He previously served as a member of both the Greenwich Board of Selectmen and the Board of Estimate and Taxation, where he worked in a bipartisan effort to safeguard a multimillion-dollar budget and deliver results for constituents. For four years, Lamont also served as chair of the State Investment Advisory Council, overseeing a multibillion-dollar state pension fund. Lamont started his own company, taking on the large and established giants of the telecom industry. He is on the faculty of Central Connecticut State University as an adjunct professor of political science and philosophy, where he also helped to found a popular business start-up competition.

Building Solutions for the Housing Shortage

Saturday, 9am

Vishaan Chakrabarti, FAIA FRAIC is the founder and creative director of Practice for Architecture and Urbanism, where he leads the firm's growing global portfolio of cultural, institutional, and public projects. Chakrabarti's past roles—including principal at architecture firms SHoP Architects and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; president of the Moynihan Station Venture at the Related Companies; director of the Manhattan Office for the New York Department of City Planning in the Bloomberg administration; and the William W. Wurster Dean of the College of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley — have given him a uniquely well-rounded perspective on how cities and their architecture function and what they need to flourish.

Jennifer Raitt is executive director of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments. She directs the agency's work in policy and service areas that span the various disciplines under NMCOG's purview. Prior to joining NMCOG in 2022, Raitt served as director of planning and community development for the Town of Arlington (Massachusetts), and was a lead author and co-chair on the American Planning Association's Housing Policy Guide. She is also a member of the steering committee for the Housing Supply Accelerator and has been recently sworn in by Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey to serve on the Commission on Unlocking Housing.

Ben Frost currently serves as the deputy executive director and chief legal officer at New Hampshire Housing, and has 30 years of experience in advancing policy innovations for housing affordability and sustainability in the state. He helps lead the efforts of legal and policy professionals who work with state and local governments, housing developers, and community stakeholders to improve the regulatory and financial environment for affordable housing. He is a certified planner and has practiced law in New Hampshire for three decades.

Erin Boggs, Esq. is the executive director of Open Communities Alliance. She has worked on issues of equity, particularly in the context of housing, for almost 20 years. Prior to joining the Alliance, Boggs served in a range of roles including as deputy director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. While at the Center she spearheaded the organization's work on opportunity and race. Boggs also worked for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut as a staff attorney and interim legal director and practiced law with a national antitrust firm. She has worked at the Harrison Institute for Public Law at Georgetown University Law School and at the Center for National Policy, both in Washington, D.C.

Zoning and Land Use Reforms

Saturday, 10:45am

Tocarra Nicole Thomas, AICP is the director of land use and development at Smart Growth America. Her role includes leading the Form Based Codes Institute (FBCI) as well as other projects and initiatives. In this role, Tocarra leads thought leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance work to further our mission to create prosperous, resilient, and healthy communities. Tocarra graduated from the University of Florida with a master of arts in urban and regional planning, where as a HUD Scholar she focused on the deployment and maintenance of affordable homeownership in Florida.

Sara C. Bronin is a Mexican-American architect, attorney, professor, and policymaker whose interdisciplinary work focuses on how law and policy can foster more equitable, sustainable, well-designed, and connected places. In addition to her books and treatises on land use and historic preservation law, she has written more than two dozen articles on renewable energy, climate change, housing, urban planning, transportation, real estate development, and federalism. She also serves as the lead author of the land use volume of the forthcoming Restatement (Fourth) of Property. Among other current projects, Bronin founded and directs the National Zoning Atlas, which aims to digitize, demystify, and democratize information about how zoning regulates housing in around 30,000 jurisdictions nationally.

John Infranca is a Florence Rogatz Visiting Professor of Law at Yale Law School and a professor of law at Suffolk University Law School. His scholarship focuses on land-use regulation, affordable housing policy, property theory, and law and religion. Infranca worked as a legal fellow at the Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, where he focused on land use regulation and affordable housing policy. He is a co-editor of *The Cambridge Handbook of the Law of the Sharing Economy* and of the forthcoming *Elgar Research Agenda for U.S. Land Use and Planning Law*. He is also the lead researcher for the Massachusetts Zoning Atlas.

Greg Kirschner is the executive director and legal director of the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. He litigates and manages the prosecution of fair housing cases filed with administrative agencies and in state and federal courts. He received his J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center and a B.A. in history from the George Washington University.

Creating a State-level Housing Strategy

Saturday, 1:30pm

Jennifer Gottlieb Elazhari has served as director at the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the division of public and Indian housing in the state of Connecticut since 2010. In this position, Elazhari facilitates development and management of affordable housing. She promotes innovative solutions to housing issues such as housing development using the HUD Project Based Voucher Program. In 2021, she received an Innovation Award from HUD for promoting formal partnerships between Connecticut housing agencies and their local public schools for referral of homeless families. Prior to joining HUD, Jennifer served in city government in Norwich, Connecticut where she developed an energy efficiency program, and won competitive grants in neighborhood stabilization and brownfield cleanup.

Reverend Eric Dobson is deputy director at Fair Share Housing Center based in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. He joined as director of community engagement in 2012. Assisting the executive director in all aspects of FSHC daily operations and strategic planning, Dobson also focuses on development, advocacy and communication, policy, and coalition building in order to bring about racial, economic and social integration. He is an ordained minister and holds a B.A. from Temple University in religion. He has extensive experience working with diverse audiences and communities and specializes in interfaith outreach. Dobson is the co-founder of Open Communities LLC, a racial integration consulting firm that works to resolve simple and complex conflicts of race, ethnicity and socio-economics. He also founded Planting Seeds of Hope, a non-profit focused on youth development and education.

Moses Gates is vice president for housing and neighborhood planning at the Regional Plan Association, and leads the organization's planning, research and advocacy efforts in affordable housing, economic development, and urban design. He also leads RPA's efforts to build international partnerships. Since joining RPA in 2016, Gates has led RPA's recommendations on affordability, economic development, and livable neighborhoods for the Fourth Regional Plan and authored or overseen several reports on housing policy and neighborhood planning. Prior to joining RPA, Gates was director of planning and community development for the Association for Neighborhood Housing Development, where he led the organization's housing development policy and planning work and initiated New York City's first Community Development Fellowship program.

Joe Aresimowicz is a former two-term speaker and eight-term state member of the Connecticut House of Representatives. He joined Gaffney, Bennett Associates in January 2021, bringing with him a wealth of knowledge of the process and players at the state capitol. He was first elected to the Connecticut General Assembly in 2004, representing the 30th House District, which encompasses Berlin and Southington. He served as House majority leader from 2012 to 2016, and as speaker from 2016 to 2020.