INNOVATION FOR INCLUSION SUMMIT
HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE MORE EQUITABLE CITIES

Speaker Biographies

WELCOME

Sarah Rosen Wartell became president of the Urban Institute in 2012 and is the third president since Urban was founded in 1968. During her tenure, Urban has articulated its strategy to “elevate the debate” by bringing more of its research insights to federal, state, and local government and practice; becoming a leader in research communications and data visualization; and undertaking an ambitious program of business systems and technology modernization. Previously, Wartell was deputy assistant to the president for economic policy and deputy director of the National Economic Council. At the US Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1993 to 1998, she advised the federal housing commissioner on housing finance, mortgage markets, and consumer protection. After government service, Wartell was the founding chief operating officer and then executive vice president of the Center for American Progress. Her work focused on the economy and housing markets, and she directed the Mortgage Finance Working Group and “Doing What Works” government performance program. Before her tenure in government, she practiced law with the Washington, DC, firm Arnold & Porter. Wartell has an AB degree with honors in urban affairs from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. She has a JD degree from Yale Law School.

Sandy Fernández is senior director of the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, where he is responsible for developing and implementing the center’s strategy and programs across the Americas. He has focused his career on delivering innovative solutions, strategies, and research and policy that drive insights on economic mobility and opportunity for the nonprofit and private sectors. Before joining Mastercard, Fernández held senior roles at Citigroup and JPMorgan Chase & Co., where he developed national community and economic development programs and led coalition efforts with civil rights, policy, and advocacy groups on asset building, financial capability, capacity building, diversity, and inclusion. He began his career in community health, conducting outreach and research and providing education to low-income immigrant communities on diabetes and cardiovascular health. He serves on the boards of Grounded Solutions Network and Veterans in Global Leadership. He holds a BA from Boston University and an MPA from New York University.

TECH IN ACTION

Jimmy Chen is the founder and chief executive officer of Propel, which builds FreshEBT, a free smartphone app that enables Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participants to manage their benefits, save money, and build their careers. Previously, Chen was a product manager at Facebook, where he led the Facebook Groups team. He has also worked at LinkedIn, Yahoo!, and the World Bank. Chen has a degree in symbolic systems from Stanford University.
Matt Hoffman directs Enterprise’s efforts to remain on the leading edge of delivering new products, programs, and policies to address the challenges facing the affordable housing and community development industry. His responsibilities include fostering a culture of innovation at Enterprise, providing research and development capacities to evaluate ideas advanced by employees and partners, providing business planning structure and discipline to the exploration of innovations, evaluating outcomes, and expanding successful innovations. Hoffman joined Enterprise in 2008 after spending five years developing residential and commercial real estate in Baltimore at a firm he cofounded. Before that, he spent seven years working with senior executives in the public and private sectors addressing business and policy issues critical to their organizations. After being a policy adviser to US Secretary of Commerce William Daley and directing the US Secretariat for Electronic Commerce, Hoffman directed a trade association of the chief technology officers from the country’s largest computer technology companies and advised start-up companies on business and policy issues as the vice president for e-commerce at Infotech Strategies Inc. Hoffman was a founding executive and vice president for strategy and business development at BeyondGuide, a cell phone content company that developed interactive audio tours of the world’s greatest cities delivered to a user’s cell phone. Before attending graduate school, Hoffman taught elementary school in California and worked for the Council of Chief State School Officers on technology policy issues.

Kiran Jain is the chief operating officer and general counsel of Neighborly, a venture-backed company delivering modern public finance to build the infrastructure people rely on to work, live, and play. She is the former chief resilience officer for the City of Oakland, one of the inaugural cities in the Rockefeller Foundation’s 100 Resilient Cities network. Jain has been a senior deputy city attorney focusing on land use, urban redevelopment, and municipal governance. She is the founder of the Civic Design Lab, focused on building community resilience. From 2010 through 2013, Jain served on the board of the Asian Law Caucus, the nation’s first legal and civil rights organization serving low-income Asian Pacific American communities. He also was the founding attorney for Kiva, a nonprofit microfinance platform connecting people through lending to alleviate poverty. Jain has received several honors for her work, including the Asian American Bar Association’s Joe Morozumi Award for Exceptional Legal Advocacy and the National Asian Pacific Bar Association’s Best Lawyers under 40 award.

Sara T (ST) L. Mayer is Code for America’s chief program officer. She leads the organization’s work in criminal justice, workforce development, and health and human services while growing and elevating a national network of community-based civic technologists. She joined Code for America after working at the San Mateo County Health System as director of public health, policy, and planning, where she focused on the service delivery of public clinics, emergency preparedness and response, the public health laboratory, social and land-use policy, and health inequities. Previously, she worked on public policy at several nonprofit organizations. She is a past board member for the Housing Leadership Council and a current board member at Human Impact Partners. She has also been an advisory board member for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Bay Area Health Inequities Initiative, and other civic roles. She earned her bachelor’s degree at Wesleyan University and her master’s degree in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley.

BJ Mahal leads civic tech and smart cities initiatives for Mastercard in North America, working with municipalities, corporations, start-ups, academia, and nonprofits to develop and bring to market solutions to help cities improve capabilities in mobility, economic development, digital payments, and inclusive growth. Previously, he worked with global companies, states, and cities at Deloitte and Microsoft. Mahal began his career as a naval officer, leading teams around the world in various combat theaters. He holds a BS in systems engineering from the US Naval Academy and an MBA from Cornell University’s Johnson Graduate School of Management.
INNOVATIVE POLICIES AND INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Rayid Ghani is director of the Center for Data Science and Public Policy and a senior fellow at the Harris School of Public Policy and the Computation Institute at the University of Chicago. He is a reformed computer scientist and wannabe social scientist, but mostly wants to increase the use of large-scale artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science–related buzzword approaches in solving large public policy and social challenges. Ghani works with governments and nonprofits in health, criminal justice, education, public safety, economic development, and urban infrastructure. He is also passionate about teaching practical data science and started the Data Science for Social Good Fellowship, which trains computer scientists, statisticians, and social scientists to work on data science problems with social impact. Before joining the University of Chicago, Ghani was the chief scientist of the Obama 2012 election campaign, where he focused on data, analytics, and technology to target and influence voters, donors, and volunteers. Previously, Ghani was a research scientist and led the machine learning group at Accenture Labs.

Ellen Hwang is the assistant director of strategic initiatives for the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Innovation and Technology. She manages and leads the development and implementation of the city’s first smart city strategy for the City of Philadelphia’s SmartCityPHL initiative. She is driving the creation of the city’s first smart city road map that will provide guidance on how the city will build its next generation and future technology infrastructure. Hwang supports the work of the innovation strategy portfolio, aimed at increasing internal capacity for innovation in municipal government. She received her BA in English and MS in city and regional planning from Temple University.

Joy Whitt is an economic intelligence analyst in the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. She works on open data application programming interfaces and visualization and analysis projects using real estate, affordable housing, and business development data. She also organizes civic hackathons on behalf of the mayor’s office and with various tech-inclusive groups. In 2015, Whitt transitioned into a career in tech by learning to code with organizations and individuals committed to teaching coding and programming to women and people of color.

Gustavo Velasquez is director of Urban–Greater DC, a cross-center initiative and multidisciplinary program of evidence and policy analysis focused on the national capital region. As a reliable source of evidence and advice, this initiative provides insights from research to policymakers and practitioners in ways both relevant and actionable. Velasquez served for nearly three years as assistant secretary for fair housing and equal opportunity at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). He served on behalf of the president as the strategic lead of the fair housing and inclusive community agenda for the Obama administration. During his tenure, HUD achieved groundbreaking enforcement victories in fair lending and in major housing discrimination cases. Velasquez led efforts to promulgate the landmark Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule, a key tool for cities, states, and other HUD funding recipients to reduce inequality and disparities in access to opportunity. Velasquez worked in executive roles in the administrations of DC mayors Anthony Williams, Adrian Fenty, and Vincent Gray. He has also worked for executive director of the Latino Economic Development Center, a local community development organization in Washington, DC, and Congreso de Latinos Unidos, the leading social service provider to Latinos in Philadelphia.
CLOSING REMARKS

Solomon Greene is a senior fellow in the Research to Action Lab and the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. His research focuses on how land-use and housing policy can improve access to opportunity for vulnerable groups and how data and technology can support more inclusive urban development. Before joining Urban, Greene was a senior adviser at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), where he helped develop a new federal regulation to reduce residential segregation and promote regional housing opportunities. He was also HUD’s principal adviser on the United Nations process for setting global sustainable development goals. Before that, Greene was a senior program officer at the Open Society Foundations, where he managed the foundation’s grants and programs on affordable housing, community development, and fair access to credit. He also launched and led the Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative, the nation’s first and largest philanthropic initiative to address the impacts of the foreclosure crisis on low-income communities. Greene has been a law fellow at the NYU Furman Center, an adjunct professor at NYU Wagner, a law clerk for the Honorable Dorothy W. Nelson on the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and a litigation associate at Munger, Tolles & Olson. Greene serves on the board of the National Housing Law Project and has served on the board of the Neighborhood Funders Group. Greene received his BA from Stanford University; his MCP from the University of California, Berkeley; and his JD from Yale Law School.