

Launching Urban's Disability Equity Policy Initiative: A Conversation on Including Disability in Research

Speaker Biographies

Celina Barrios-Millner is co-vice president of the Office of Race and Equity Research at the Urban Institute, where she manages the Office's support for equity-oriented research and practice across Urban. Barrios-Millner brings 20 years of experience advancing transformational equity and inclusion strategies through the public sector. She served as senior advisor to Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and as the city's chief of equity and inclusion under Acting Mayor Kim Janey. In that role, Barrios-Millner was charged with embedding equity and racial justice into all city planning and operations and provided the equity guidance to ensure over \$500 million in federal recovery funds were allocated to communities and sectors disproportionately affected by the pandemic. She previously established the city's first Supplier Diversity program, oversaw the city's local hire policy, and helped design the city's Immigrant Advancement Agenda. She was also the northeast regional director for the National Immigration Forum, led partnership development for the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office, and has advocated for social justice causes as a community organizer.

Allie Cannington is a white, Disabled, Jewish, and Queer activist and organizer from the Bay Area. Since gaining access to movements for disability rights and justice over ten years ago, Allie has organized people with disabilities on local, state, and national levels, always centering on people with disabilities who live at the margins, including LGBTQIA, Black, Indigenous, people of color, low/no income, and youth with disabilities. As Senior Manager, Allie leads The Kelsey's policy and advocacy efforts to advance disability-forward housing solutions at state and federal levels. As Allie also spearheads community engagement initiatives for our housing pipeline, they work to ensure that the change we create is co-led by diverse and multiply marginalized disabled people. Within and outside of The Kelsey, Allie's work is ultimately dedicated to unveiling everyone's proximity to disability and to fueling justice movements that are intersectional, sustainable, and intergenerational.

Rebecca Cokley is the program officer for the foundation's first-ever U.S. Disability Rights program, which is focused on strengthening the field, building a pipeline of diverse leadership, promoting disability pride, and mobilizing resources toward disability rights work. She also serves as the foundation's liaison to the President's Council for Disability Inclusion in Philanthropy.

Rebecca Cokley, before joining the Ford Foundation, was the cofounder and director of the Disability Justice initiative at the Center for American Progress, where she built out a progressive policy platform that protected the rights and services disabled people depend on for survival and also developed innovative solutions like a proposed disabled worker tax credit and increased access to capital for disability-owned small businesses. She also stewarded a campaign that resulted in an unprecedented 12 presidential candidates developing disability policy platforms. Prior to her work at American Progress, she served as the executive director for the National Council on Disability, where she worked on sexual violence on college campuses, policing reform, and the civil rights of disabled parents. A three-time presidential appointee, Rebecca served in key policy roles at the Department of Education and the

Department of Health and Human Services, as well as oversaw diversity and inclusion efforts for the Obama administration.

Kimberlyn Leary is a senior vice president, managing research and program development across the Urban Institute. She comes to Urban from Harvard University, where she is an associate professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, an associate professor in the department of health policy and management at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and a lecturer in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School. For four years, she directed the Enabling Change program for the Doctor of Public Health program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Leary also served as executive director of policy outreach and of the Center of Excellence in Women's Mental Health at McLean Hospital. Before that, she was chief psychologist at the Cambridge Health Alliance for nearly 12 years. Leary served as an advisor to the White House during the Obama administration. As a Robert Wood Johnson health policy fellow, she helped launch the Advancing Equity initiative for the Obama White House Council on Women and Girls. She was also an advisor to the health division at White House Office of Management and Budget and senior policy advisor to the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Leary served on the Biden-Harris transition as a volunteer part-time member of the Agency Review Team for the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the Executive Office of the President. Leary writes, consults, and teaches on adaptive leadership, leading teams, cross-boundary collaboration, negotiation, and conflict transformation. She holds an MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School and a PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan, and she completed advanced training as a clinical psychoanalyst at the Michigan Psychoanalytic Association. Leary serves on the board of trustees at Amherst College, the Austen Riggs Center, and the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute and serves as an advisor to Pivotal Ventures and the Upswing Fund. Additionally, she serves as a judge for the McArthur Foundation's 100&Change competition and for Lever for Change's Lone Star Competition.

Katherine Pérez is the inaugural Director of the Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy, and Innovation. She graduated from the UCLA School of Law (2013) and is a current doctoral candidate in Disability Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago where she is writing a dissertation on the Burger Supreme Court (1969-1986) cases on the criminal legal system and mental disability. Katherine writes about and presents on Disability and Immigration law and policy. Her article, "A Critical Race and Disability Legal Studies Approach to Immigration Law and Policy" advocates for an intersectional approach to understanding immigration that considers disability as well as a multidisciplinary approach that combines grassroots activism with legal work. Katherine teaches a Disability Rights Law course at Loyola Law School as a Visiting Professor of Law. Katherine's sense of disability justice formed at a young age as she grew up with psychiatric disabilities and is a sister to an autistic woman with intellectual disability. Katherine has dedicated her life toward advocating for people with disabilities on local, national, and international levels. She worked for Congresswoman Linda Sanchez as a Legislative Fellow from 2006-2007 as a Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Fellow. From 2008-2010, Katherine lived in La Libertad, Peru working with a local disability rights organization as a Peace Corps volunteer. From 2015-2019, she helped launch and led The National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities (CNLD), an intersectional organization that advocates on important issues and provides a positive space for the disabled Latinx community. As a queer, disabled woman of color, and granddaughter of Mexican immigrants, Katherine's lived experienced informs her approach to intersectional justice.

Susan J. Popkin is director of the Urban Institute's Housing Opportunities and Services Together (HOST) Initiative and an Institute fellow in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center. A nationally recognized expert on public and assisted housing policy, Popkin directs a research program that uses community engagement and community-based participatory approaches to explore new strategies for

improving outcomes for families, and she conducts evaluations of complex community-based interventions. Popkin is the author of *No Simple Solutions: Transforming Public Housing in Chicago*; coauthor of the award-winning *Moving to Opportunity: The Story of an American Experiment to Fight Ghetto Poverty*; lead author of *The Hidden War: Crime and the Tragedy of Public Housing in Chicago*; and coauthor of *Public Housing Transformation: The Legacy of Segregation*.

Bonnielin Swenor is an epidemiologist and associate professor at The Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and holds joint appointments at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is the founder and director of the [Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center](#), which aims to shift the paradigm from 'living with a disability' to 'thriving with a disability' through research, education, and policy. Dr. Swenor's research is motivated by her experience with disability, as she has low vision. Her work takes a 'disability data justice' approach to advancing equity for people with disabilities and focuses on three areas: (1) developing novel methods to quantify disparities impacting disabled people; (2) testing innovative strategies to reduce these inequities and their upstream root causes, and (3) promoting disability inclusion in higher education, STEM, public health, and health care professions. She is a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) Forum on Aging, Disability, and Independence and serves as an advisor on disability equity and inclusion to multiple organizations and agencies, including the Subgroup on Individuals with Disabilities within the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Health Equity Workgroup within the ACD at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).