

Improving Experiences for Residents with Disabilities in Federally Assisted Family Housing

Speaker Biographies

Seth Embry is the Chief Operating Officer at the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District in Birmingham, Alabama. Most recently, he previously served as a policy analyst at the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association in Washington, DC (2018-2021) and as a senior associate at Quadel Consulting & Training, LLC in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2015-2018). Through these experiences, Embry developed a depth of knowledge on affordable housing policy at the local and national levels, as well as best practices for operating housing authorities. In these roles, Embry trained authority staff members, educated Congressional staff on affordable housing programs available in their jurisdictions and engaged with external stakeholders to build coalitions and work towards common housing goals. Earlier on in his career, Embry served as Resource Coordinator for the City of Philadelphia, where he worked directly with men experiencing chronic homelessness, supporting them in their goals of self-sufficiency. In 2011, he transitioned to the Tenant Services Liaison position, where he acted as manager of the City of Philadelphia's permanent supportive housing programs for those with histories of homelessness and behavioral health challenges. Throughout his career, Embry has gained a deep understanding of affordable housing systems and structures — from the day-to-day experiences of those accessing programs, to what it means to implement housing policy at the local and national scales. Embry received a Masters degree in Public Policy from Drexel University and a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice at Temple University.

Deborah Jackson is a mobility supervisor for the Relocation, Orientation, Training, and Counseling (ROTC) at the District of Columbia Housing Authority, where she also previously served as a community navigator and Service Counts Coordinator. In these capacities, she has worked directly with residents, property managers, and leadership within the Office of Resident Services and other DCHA departments to help tenants with relocation services, and to ensure an understanding of the needs for and appropriate service delivery to residents. Additionally, she works with various agencies within the communities to provide necessary services to residents on properties she served. For example, she collaborated with an organization to create a telehealth clinic on a property, which offered mammograms, addressing health disparities within the community. Since 2015 she has also served as an instructor for the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials on the Family Self Sufficiency program and Excellence in Customer Service. Prior to joining DCHA, Ms. Jackson coordinated the Family Self-Sufficiency program for the Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County, managing program staff and providing case management services to support program participants in achieving their economic self-sufficiency and homeownership goals. She will obtain her Master's degree in Social Work from the University of Central Florida in December of this year and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology for the University of Maryland Baltimore City.

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.

Demetria McCain serves as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). At FHEO, McCain assists HUD's efforts to eliminate housing discrimination, promote economic opportunity, and achieve diverse, inclusive communities. McCain joins HUD following fifteen years of service, with five as president, at the Inclusive Communities Project (ICP), a Dallas, TX-based affordable fair housing nonprofit. Prior to becoming president, she oversaw operations, communications, and ICP's Mobility Assistance Program, a housing mobility program that helps housing choice voucher holders exercise their fair housing rights. Conceived by Demetria, ICP's "Voices for Opportunity" initiative has provided advocacy training to low-income renters and neighborhood groups of color. Before joining ICP, McCain worked on USDA Section 515 rural multifamily housing matters at the National Housing Law. She was also a staff attorney for the Neighborhood Legal Services Program of Washington, D.C., assigned to the southeast office, where her portfolio primarily included landlord-tenant matters for low-income renters in private and public housing. She has taught, as an adjunct instructor, a Fair Housing and Homelessness course to undergraduate Coppin State University students. McCain brings dual vantage points to FHEO after having spent years assisting both housing choice voucher holders who sought low-poverty well-resourced housing options and neighborhood groups in underserved communities of color who sought more equitable distribution of resources and services. She is a graduate of Howard University School of Law, New York University, and Brooklyn College and a member of the Dallas Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Cathleen O'Brien is Access Living's Housing Community Organizer and its staff liaison for the Disability Rights Action Coalition for Housing (DRACH) where she works to build power for housing and disability justice in Chicago. She started at Access Living in 2015 as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. In 2021, O'Brien was selected as a member of Rise Justice Labs summer cohort where her team focused on strengthening federal infrastructure to support the production of housing for people with disabilities who use supportive services and who would otherwise live in hospitals, institutions, congregate settings, or remain unstably housed. She is a member of the Community Advisory Council on Homelessness for the state of Illinois and has served on the City of Chicago's Inclusionary Housing Task Force.

Kenneth M. Walden is the Managing Attorney for the Civil Rights Team at Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago. The Civil Rights Team represents persons with disabilities in civil rights cases under the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other

laws. Ken directs the organization's legal work, which includes: (a) advice, counseling, and representation to persons with disabilities who have civil rights complaints; (b) a disability-specific fair housing testing program; (c) education and outreach to various audiences about disability rights laws; and (d) public policy advocacy. For several years, Ken served as an Adjunct Professor at Loyola University Chicago School of Law. He taught a course on disability law. Before joining Access Living, Ken served as Director of the Tenant Advocacy Project of the Public Justice Center (PJC) in Baltimore, Maryland. Prior to the PJC, Ken was a staff attorney for the Legal Aid Bureau in Baltimore. Ken received his law degree, with Honors, from the University of Maryland School of Law in 1990. He earned his bachelor's degree, with Highest Honors, from Rutgers College in 1985.

Corianne Payton Scally is a senior fellow in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where she explores the design, implementation, and outcomes of affordable housing and community development policy and programs for vulnerable populations across rural and urban areas. Her research on rural communities ranges from measuring assets and capacity to guiding investments in equitable solutions that boost services and infrastructure, and improve health and economic mobility. To explore these issues, Scally leads mixed-method research projects, directing extensive primary data collection via site visits, interviews, focus groups, and surveys, and analysis of administrative data to evaluate program processes and outcomes. Scally is a former associate professor in urban planning and former affordable housing developer. From 2015 to 2016, she led data and research initiatives at the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Service for the Urban Institute. She received her PhD in urban planning and policy development from Rutgers University