

# Advancing Racial Equity in Our Communities: Involving Communities in Equitable Development

## Speaker Biographies

**Shari Davis** is the co-executive director of the Participatory Budgeting Project and joined the PBP staff after nearly 15 years of service and leadership in local government. As Director of Youth Engagement and Employment for the City of Boston she launched Youth Lead the Change, the first youth participatory budgeting process in the US, which won the US Conference of Mayors' City Livability Award. Shari first got involved in city government in high school, serving as the Citywide Neighborhood Safety Coordinator on the Boston Mayor's Youth Council and working at the Mayor's Youthline. Shari is a graduate of Boston University's Sargent College for Health and Rehabilitation Sciences and holds a master's degree in anatomy and physiology.

**Andrew Holland** currently serves as the Assistant Budget Director for Strategy and Performance with the City of Durham, Budget & Management Services (BMS) Department. He oversees the Office of Performance and Innovation, which leads continuous improvement and innovation initiatives for the City of Durham by collaborating with city staff, residents, local businesses, and partner agencies to bring new ideas and improved practices into City government to bring about better outcomes for the organization and community. Andrew also oversees all outreach and engagement efforts on behalf of BMS through the Participatory Budgeting (PB) Durham program. Before joining the City of Durham, Andrew was the Assistant to the County Manager for Mecklenburg County, in which he coordinated the county's Enterprise Risk Management and Compliance program and worked on special projects. He also spent time with the City of Fayetteville as the Assistant to the City Manager, Business Analyst for the City of Durham, as part Fleet Management Department, and as an Environmental Protection Specialist with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Washington D.C. In 2018, he was recognized as one of Charlotte's Community Building Initiative Leaders Under 40. In 2016, he was the Local Government Federal Credit Union (LGFCU) fellow for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government Leading for Results program. Andrew received his Master of Public Administration from North Carolina Central University and a Bachelor of Science in Urban & Regional Planning from East Carolina University.

**Peter A. Tatian** is a senior fellow at the Urban Institute and research director for Urban-Greater DC. He is an expert on US housing policy, particularly in the areas of housing assistance and affordable housing preservation. He advises nonprofits on performance management and evaluation and heads Urban's work providing technical assistance on data collection and use to grantees of the US Department of Education's Promise Neighborhoods initiative. Tatian directed the evaluation of the National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling program, which has provided counseling services to more than 1 million troubled homeowners. He has also studied the impacts of public and supportive housing on neighborhoods and has worked on housing policy reform in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Tatian is a member of the DC Local Initiatives Support Corporation advisory committee, the Park Morton New Communities steering committee, and the United Planning Organization community reinvestment advisory council.

**Sonia Torres Rodríguez** is a research associate in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center at the Urban Institute. Torres Rodríguez applies quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of policies and programs related to labor and housing markets. Their research interests include

racial equity, neighborhood change, equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, equitable development, econometric analysis, and community-engaged methods. Sonia also assists with the management of the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, a network advancing the effective and equitable use of data and technology. Before joining Urban, Sonia was a research fellow for Stanford's Center for Poverty and Inequality, supporting a national qualitative and ethnographic study of poverty and inequality in the United States. Sonia graduated from Rice University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematical economic analysis and will be graduating with a Master of Science in applied economics from Johns Hopkins University in May 2023. They were recently selected as a 2022 Research in Color mentee.

**Mary K. Cunningham** is vice president for metropolitan housing and communities policy at the Urban Institute, where researchers and policy experts work to diagnose problems and identify solutions on issues including homelessness and access to affordable housing, fair housing and discrimination, community and economic development, land use and zoning, racial segregation, and housing and climate change. She has studied housing and homelessness for more than 20 years and has led several evaluations of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's homelessness and assisted housing programs, including those related to permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention, and housing choice vouchers. From 2005 to 2008, Cunningham launched and directed the Homelessness Research Institute, the research and education arm of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. She also cochaired a research council on homelessness composed of nationally recognized academics and policy researchers. She has authored numerous reports, including *A Research Agenda for Ending Homelessness* and *Homelessness Counts*. Cunningham has been cited in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, has been a guest on *The Weeds* podcast and was recently interviewed on *CBS Morning News*. She started her career as a caseworker for families with housing vouchers at Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership (now Metro Housing|Boston) and has an MPP from Georgetown University.