

# Using the Equity Resource Navigator to Advance Equity in Communities

## Speaker Biographies

### Introduction

**Anna Shipp** is a principal policy associate in the Research to Action Lab at the Urban Institute, where she leads a body of work that supports local leaders in creating vibrant, just, and climate-forward economies. Her work bridges the gap between research and practice by translating findings into actionable and holistic policy solutions that serve people, places, and the planet. Shipp's 20 years of interdisciplinary experience spans workforce development, small business development, economic development, urban sustainability, and climate resilience and includes direct service, policy advocacy, and policy research. Before joining Urban, Shipp was executive director for the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia. There, she led the organization's work to empower the region's diverse independent businesses to do well by doing good; to advance industries critical to a just, thriving, and climate-forward economy; and to advocate for an economic ecosystem that serves community needs, shares wealth, and protects the planet. Shipp is grounded in both the social and physical sciences. She holds a bachelor's degree from Temple University and a master's degree in environmental studies from the University of Pennsylvania.

### Supporting Racial Equity Work as a Network Organization

**Cathy Albisa** is the co-founder and former Executive Director of Partners for Dignity & Rights (formally NESRI), a social movement organization that supports community groups across the country in their campaigns for structural change. Partners for Dignity & Rights is the home of the Dignity in Schools Campaign and the Worker-Driven Social Responsibility Network. The organization also worked deeply in partnerships with visionary organizers on issues as diverse as universal healthcare and community land trusts. She serves on the Human Rights Commission in New York City, and has published widely on economic and social rights, racial and gender justice, and human rights generally. Cathy has also been a director at the Center for Economic and Social Rights, an Associate Director at the Human Rights Institute at Columbia Law School, a co-director of the Human Rights and Gender Justice clinic at CUNY Law School, and a constitutional rights litigator at the ACLU and the Center for Reproductive Rights. She has also served in the leadership of boards of directors such as the Center for Constitutional Rights, the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, and the Center for Social Inclusion, among others. Cathy graduated with a JD from Columbia Law School and a BA from the University of Miami.

**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. Previously, she was 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. Barrios-Millner is a graduate of American University and holds a master's degree in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.

**Beverly Scurry** is a leader in racial equity with over nine years of experience working across various sectors, including early childhood development, public health, grassroots community activism, and local municipality support. She holds a joint Master of Health Administration/Business Administration degree from Pfeiffer University in NC. Currently based in Oxon Hill, Maryland, Beverly serves as the Interim Director of Race, Equity, and Leadership at the National League of Cities (NLC). Since starting at NLC in March 2023, she has spearheaded several transformative projects, including the Elected Leaders of Color Convening, the REAL Institute Cohort, and the recently launched REAL Essentials courses offered through NLC University. Originally from Burlington, NC, Beverly maintains strong ties to her hometown, where most of her family resides. Her commitment to racial equity is not just professional but deeply personal. During her time in North Carolina, she actively contributed to the community as an Apprentice with the Racial Equity Institute, Inc., based in Greensboro, NC. Her service on the boards of several local equity coalitions is a testament to her dedication to advancing racial equity at the grassroots level. Throughout her career, Beverly has spearheaded equity-related initiatives, including coordinating the Health Systems Science course in the inaugural UNC School of Medicine MED EXCEL Program during her time at UNC Health; leading the development of Orange County, NC Health Department's first Racial Equity Strategic Plan during her time as the Board of Health's Strategic Plan Manager; and consulting with the towns of Hillsborough, NC, and Mebane, NC as an independent consultant to advance their racial equity efforts.

### Live Demonstration of the Equity Resource Navigator

**Chitra Balakrishnan** is a research analyst in the Office of Race and Equity Research at the Urban Institute, where she works on research projects that equip changemakers to advance equity-focused policy initiatives. Before joining Urban, Balakrishnan worked in Illinois governor J. B. Pritzker's office on issues related to infrastructure, energy, environment, and public safety. She was involved with planning and implementation efforts stemming from Illinois's Climate and Equitable Jobs Act and the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. She is passionate about data-driven policies that incorporate the perspectives of affected communities. Balakrishnan attended Duke University and holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy with a minor in mathematics.

### The Changing Landscape of Equity Work at the Local Level

**Larissa Estes**, DrPH serves as the Executive Director of the Racial Equity Commission established through Executive Order 16-22. She has over 20 years of experience in allied health, healthcare, and public health with a focus on community and equity. Prior to joining the State of California, Dr. Estes served as the Executive Director of ALL IN Alameda County, a county-wide initiative established by the late Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan to address issues of poverty including basic needs, quality education, and economic opportunity that leads to self-sufficiency. Throughout her career she has served as a key author of several publications on women's health, accountable communities for health, medical high utilization, and mental health and wellbeing. She is interested in integrating evidence-informed strategies into policy and practice across sectors that fortify equity and impact community wellbeing. Dr. Estes has prior experience in program planning, implementation, and evaluation; maternal and child health; women's health; mental health and wellbeing; and public health policy analysis at the federal, state, and local level. Dr. Estes received her BS in Athletic Training from Duquesne University, an MPH in Family and Child Health from the University of Arizona, and a DrPH in Community Health Practice from the University of

Texas Health Science Center, Houston. She is a sustaining member of Junior League of Oakland-East Bay and an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. Dr. Estes also serves on the Board of Directors for the College of Behavioral Health Leadership, Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation (Oakland, CA), and American Cancer Society – SF Bay Area, and participates on an Advisory Committee for the Prairie View A&M School of Public and Allied Health.

**Latoya W. Harris** (she/her/hers) serves as the Cultural Engagement Officer for the County of Summit (OH). In her role, she strategizes with the County Executive, county senior management, community leaders and partners to develop and implement intentional solutions to increase diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and belonging (DEIAB) in the region. Together, they have identified three core areas of impact: county operations, direct community support and community collaboration working to create diverse, equitable and inclusive housing, education, business expansion and retention, and health initiatives. She is the first to serve in this position as Summit County publicly declared Racism as a Public Health Crisis in 2020 to address the need for an intentional investment to systemic change. Prior to her current role, Latoya was employed with Summit County Department of Job & Family Services (SCDJFS) for 23 years. With a concentration of contract negotiations, workforce development, community engagement, training, budget management, and strategic planning, she worked with a multitude of non-profit and government agencies over decades to build opportunities and sustainable enhancements for the community. Latoya has dedicated her career to developing programming, building pathways and community bonds to better serve and promote self-sufficiency and healthy families amongst historically marginalized individuals. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Individual and Family Consumer Studies & Gerontology: Family Life emphasis from Kent State University. She is a lifetime Bridges Out of Poverty trainer and a graduate of Child & Family Leadership Class XVIII. With a long dedication to public service, Latoya currently serves on the Summit County Continuum of Care Executive Board of Directors, Summit Education Initiative Cradle 2 Career Steering Committee, Akron Community Foundation Black Giving Fund Collective, Women's Endowment Fund Workforce Forum Committee, Full Term First Birthday Executive Committee, Greater Akron Chamber Diversity Professionals Council / Procurement Council and the United Way of Summit & Medina Counties Impact & DEI Committee.

**Josie B.H. Pickens** (she/her), as the City of Philadelphia's Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer (CDEIO), provides direction, guidance, advice, and support to the Mayor, as well as City departments, agencies, authorities, boards, and commissions, on improving and strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout City government, including in the provision of services and the conduct of City business. Josie manages the operations of the DEI office and provides oversight and support to the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs and the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. As CDEIO, Josie also provides policy guidance and strategic direction to the City's Office of Economic Opportunity. Prior to joining the City, Josie worked as a Supervising Attorney and Co-Director of the Energy Unit at Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS) where she led advocacy to improve energy and water affordability and efforts to ensure equitable access to utility customer assistance programs. Josie represented hundreds of low-income Philadelphia residents in legal disputes to preserve their access to life-essential utility service. She represented individuals and Philadelphia-based community organizations in cases before the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission and Pennsylvania courts. As an attorney, Josie played a leading role in advocacy campaigns to improve Pennsylvania's energy affordability standards and to establish the City of Philadelphia's first income-based water affordability program. Other accomplishments include commissioning CLS's first study on race, COVID-19, and utility insecurity and serving as the first Chair of CLS's Racial Equity Subcommittee. Josie is a graduate of Temple University, Beasley School of Law, and the University of California, Berkeley. Josie is a Philadelphia native and a proud graduate of Overbrook High School.

**Olivia Soledad** is a Policy Program Associate at the Urban Institute's Office of Race and Equity Research where she manages a portfolio of projects focused on supporting local government officials, practitioners, and community-based organizations to advance equity-focused policy initiatives and strategies.

Prior to joining Urban, Olivia worked at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars' Mexico Institute where she coordinated the Institute's day-to-day operations and executed programming and events to bring together leading U.S. and Mexican public servants and policymakers, business leaders, and scholars. While at the Wilson Center, Olivia also co-founded and led a cross-cutting initiative on gender-based violence, "Accessing Justice: Femicide and the Rule of Law in Latin America." Prior to joining the Wilson Center, she completed field work in Mexico where she studied migration patterns from Central America. Originally from Mexico, she previously worked at the City of Boston's Office for Immigrant Advancement and at the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations in Geneva. Olivia received B.A.s in Psychology and International Relations from Boston University with concentrations in the Middle East and International Systems and World Order.