

Mobilizing Community and Economic Development to Address Climate Change: Paths for Transformative Action

Speaker Biographies

Opening Remarks

Mary K. Cunningham is senior vice president for research management and programs at the Urban Institute, overseeing Urban's research and policy divisions. Previously, she was Urban's vice president for metropolitan housing and communities policy, where researchers and policy experts work to bolster affordable housing, eradicate homelessness, facilitate land-use and zoning reform for equitable development, improve transportation access, foster opportunity-rich neighborhoods and cities, and fortify communities against the challenges of climate change. As a researcher, she studied housing and homelessness for more than 25 years. 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. Cunningham has been cited in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*. She has been a guest on *The Weeds* podcast, *News Hour*, and *CBS Morning News*. She started her career as a caseworker for families with housing vouchers at Metro Housing|Boston (formerly, the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership) and has an MPP from Georgetown University.

Jennifer Bradley is a senior fellow at The Kresge Foundation. Bradley supports the American Cities Program at Kresge through convenings and thought leadership. She joined the foundation in 2021. Previously, Bradley served as the director of the Center for Urban Innovation at the Aspen Institute, where she focused on inclusive innovation and equitable economic development strategies in cities. Bradley has also held positions with the Brookings Institution, where she co-authored *The Metropolitan Revolution* and developed state-level strategies to support metropolitan economic growth, and with the Constitutional Accountability Center, where she co-authored amicus briefs in major appellate cases that supported environmental protections and community development. A native of Austin, Texas, Bradley earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas, a Master of Philosophy from the University of Oxford and a juris doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center. She serves on the boards of the Edlavitch D.C. Jewish Community Center and the Open Contracting Partnership.

How Community and Economic Development Actors Engage in Climate Action and Pathways for Transformative Action

Andrew Rumbach is a senior fellow in the Housing and Communities Division at the Urban Institute, where he coleads the Climate and Communities practice area. He is a leading expert on the impacts of natural hazards, disasters, and climate change on US communities and the federal, state, and local policies aimed at reducing risk and increasing resilience. His areas of research emphasis include affordable housing, land-use policy, and postdisaster recovery. Rumbach has published dozens of peer-reviewed studies on disaster and climate-related topics in venues such as *Natural Hazards*, *Natural Hazards Review*, *Housing Studies*, *Urban Studies*, the *Journal of Urban Affairs*, and *Habitat International*, and he sits on the editorial boards of the *Journal of the American Planning Association* and the *Journal of Planning Literature*. Before joining Urban, Rumbach was a tenured professor of urban planning at Texas A&M University and previously at the University of Colorado Denver. He earned a BA in political science from Reed College and a PhD and MRP in city and regional planning from Cornell University.

Opportunities and Challenges at the Community Economic Development and Climate Nexus

Madeleine Chaisson is a Senior Manager at Jobs for the Future (JFF), where she works to connect communities to opportunity by helping organizations build more effective, equitable, and efficient workforce systems — both within service organizations and across broader regional ecosystems. At JFF, Chaisson leads place-based workforce strategy and field implementation work, with expertise in sector partnerships, work-based learning, program design, and collaborative stakeholder engagement. Her portfolio includes supporting the CREST (Climate-Resilient Employees for a Sustainable Tomorrow) initiative aimed at closing the gap between the demand for a skilled green workforce and the number of people prepared for those opportunities. She also leads workforce strategy development for the Maryland ENOUGH initiative and the Gulf Coast Construction Coalition, building community-driven pathways into quality jobs in regions facing significant economic and climate pressures. In addition, Chaisson serves as a technical assistance provider through JFF's DOL-funded Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs program, supporting grantees across the country in designing and scaling workforce strategies aligned with federal infrastructure investments. Chaisson is based in Houston, TX and holds two bachelors of arts from the University of Arkansas and a master's in public service from the Clinton School of Public Service.

Stuart Clarke is a seasoned non-profit leader whose experience spans a broad range of responsibilities in a variety of philanthropic settings. This includes serving as a program officer at the Turner Foundation; as development director at the Southern Partners Fund; as program director at the William Penn Foundation; and as the executive director of the Town Creek

Foundation. He has recently taken on the role of Program Director at Hive Fund for Climate and Gender Justice where he oversees grantmaking that centers frontline communities in the work of advancing a just, equitable and democratic clean energy transition in North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, and Louisiana. Clarke's life, work, and vision have also been informed and enriched by a set of precious volunteer assignments, including leadership roles on the boards of Greenpeace US, the Maryland League of Conservation Voters, and the Environmental Grantmakers Association. Clarke currently chairs the Earthjustice Board of Trustees and serves on the Board of Trustees of the Energy Foundation. Educated at Lafayette College and Yale University, Clarke was born and raised in New York City, and has lived in Texas, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Washington, D.C. He currently lives in Talbot County, on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Krista Egger builds and leads transformational initiatives within the affordable housing sector, working towards a future when all homes are healthy, resilient, and affordable. She thrives when creating collaborative, practical solutions to complex problems. As vice president of Building Resilient Futures at Enterprise Community Partners, she stewards the organization's national environmental programs. Egger launched and provides strategic oversight for the 2020 and 2026 Green Communities Criteria, Health Action Plan framework, Resilience Academies, and Decarbonization Hubs. She creates and leverages programs, policies, and capital investment across the federal, state, and local level to bring value to affordable housing communities. Prior to Enterprise, Egger directed Advanced Energy's Affordable Housing business unit. She led the guaranteed-performance SystemVision program and consulting services with Habitat for Humanity International, NeighborWorks and utility clients. Egger is a published author and frequent speaker on high performance affordable housing, leveraging 20 years of change-making experience with building science, green building, healthy housing, and climate resilience.

Sara McTarnaghan is a principal research associate and colead of the Climate and Communities practice area at the Urban Institute. Her work focuses on postdisaster housing recovery, resilience capacity building, climate-forward regional planning, and long-term adaptation to climate risk, with a focus on achieving equitable community-level outcomes. McTarnaghan leads mixed-methods research, evaluation, and technical assistance for federal agencies, philanthropies, and local governments to strengthen climate-resilient housing and community development strategies. Her work helps decisionmakers design policies, target resources, and implement programs that improve outcomes for communities facing increasing climate risk. McTarnaghan's recent work includes leading outcome evaluations of city- and regional-level climate resilience initiatives; conducting a US Department of Housing and Urban Development-funded study on the role of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery in supporting disaster recovery for renters and affordable rental housing; supporting regional planning efforts in California's Central Valley under the Jobs First program; developing

scenario-planning tools to help Gulf Coast communities address climate-related health risks; and providing technical assistance to local governments and community development organizations to advance community-driven climate action. McTarnaghan is a frequent contributor to media on climate and disaster issues, with her work featured in NPR, the New York Times, the Associated Press, the Los Angeles Times, and CityLab. She previously worked at a nonprofit housing organization in Santiago, Chile, and is fluent in Spanish. She holds an MS in community and regional planning and an MA in Latin American studies from the University of Texas at Austin.

Local Spotlight: Advancing Economic Development in the Era of Climate Change: Perspectives from Tucson, Arizona

Kimber Lanning is Founder and CEO of Local First Arizona, a statewide organization implementing innovative strategies for new models of economic development that create vibrant and thriving local economies. Lanning is an entrepreneur, business leader and community development specialist who works to cultivate strong self-reliant communities and inspire a higher quality of life for people across Arizona. Lanning's passions, which are seen throughout her work, include fostering economic resilience, increasing access to capital, and rebuilding food, energy and financial systems in order to create opportunity for all. Lanning has grown Local First Arizona into a widely respected organization that is leading the nation in implementing systems and policies to ensure a level playing field for entrepreneurial endeavors of all sizes. With over 3,000 business members and four statewide offices, Lanning leads a team of 68 staff who work on a diverse array of programs ranging from healthy local food access, entrepreneurial development in under resourced communities, and rural community development, each of which plays a part in building sustainable and resilient local economies.

Fátima Luna, the City of Tucson's Chief Resilience Officer, leads the implementation of Tucson Resilient Together, the city's climate action plan. With a background as Mayor Romero's Climate and Sustainability Policy Advisor, she spearheaded the Climate Emergency Declaration and EV Readiness Roadmap and oversaw the development of the Tucson Resilient Together plan. Formerly, Luna served as an environmental economist at the Sonoran Institute, focusing on conservation initiatives in the Colorado River Delta. Raised in a rural Mexican town, she holds degrees from UC Berkeley and the University of Arizona. Fátima also serves as a Board Member for High Country News and is an advocate for racial and climate justice.

Lane Mandle serves as the head of the City of Tucson's new Office of Community and Economic Impact, where she leads efforts to align the city's economic development, climate action, equity, prosperity, and cultural affairs divisions to advance projects that strengthen neighborhoods, support local businesses, and create lasting economic opportunity for the people of Tucson. A

veteran public servant with extensive experience in municipal leadership, Mandle previously served as Chief of Staff to the Tucson City Manager. She also served as city's chief Public Information Officer where she lead the effort to pass more than \$1.2 billion in city bond and sales tax initiatives. Government administration is Lane's second career. Prior to joining the City of Tucson, she spent 20 years in the restaurant industry where she and her husband owned a restaurant and catering company. A Philadelphia transplant, Lane fell in love with Tucson while attending the University of Arizona, where she now proudly sends both of her children.

Ginger Sykes Torres is the Vice President of Resiliency Programs at Local First Arizona, North America's largest coalition of local businesses. In this role, she leads climate, sustainability, and food systems initiatives, working with urban, rural, and tribal communities to foster resilience and promote the growth of enduring, local economies across Arizona. Before joining Local First, Ginger was appointed by the White House to serve as the State Executive Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency in Arizona, overseeing disaster assistance, price support, conservation, and lending programs for farmers and ranchers. She championed the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, expanded producer access to federal resources, and advanced the agency's commitment to integrating urban farming into the broader agricultural landscape. A graduate of Stanford University's Earth Systems Program, her interdisciplinary expertise spans environmental policy, land use planning, environmental impact analysis, energy siting, and climate resilience planning, gained through work with federal agencies, utilities, and developers. Her community board service includes the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC), the Heard Museum, The Nature Conservancy, Valley Leadership, and the City of Phoenix Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission.

Oriya Cohen is a policy program manager in the Research to Action Lab at the Urban Institute, where he leads cross-division initiatives that help policymakers and practitioners strengthen climate resilience, spur housing innovation, and advance wealth equity. With experience in local government, community development, and grantmaking, Cohen brings an interdisciplinary approach to research and engagement with changemakers. Before joining Urban, Cohen was a Coro Fellow in public affairs in California, where he supported organizations to strengthen health and housing partnerships, develop affordable housing, and analyze the impacts of sea-level rise across the Bay Area. Before joining Coro, he worked in the Oakland Office of the Mayor, helping to establish the city's first department of transportation and supporting the development of a citywide general obligation bond to fund transportation, infrastructure, and affordable housing projects across the city. Cohen received a BA in sustainable environmental design from the University of California, Berkeley.