

ABOUT THE HOMES RI SUMMIT PRESENTERS

Peter Asen, Providence Housing Authority - Panelist, How Housing Works

Peter Asen has been the Director of Strategy and Development for the Providence Housing Authority since January of 2018. In that role, Peter oversees communication between the PHA's executive office and PHA resident organizations; coordinates strategic planning; and develops new resources, programs, policies and partnerships. From 2012 to 2018, he served in Providence City Hall, first as the first Director of the City's Healthy Communities Office, and then as Director of Partnerships and Intergovernmental Affairs. He holds a Master's Degree in Labor Studies from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and an undergraduate degree from Brown University.

Tatiana Baena, Central Falls School District - Panelist, Education Advocates are Housing Advocates

Tatiana was born in Medellin, Colombia, and migrated with her family to the United States, arriving in Central Falls, Rhode Island. Tatiana has been serving as the Director of Enrichment Opportunities at the Central Falls School District for over a year, working to cultivate community partnerships and secure out-of-school time programs for our students. For the past five years, she has stayed active in the city by combining her love of soccer and community to organize the Mundialito Soccer Tournament, which she founded to raise funds to provide non-traditional scholarships to Central Falls student-athletes. Tatiana is a member of the Central Falls Alumni Association and the City Planning Board, serving as Vice-Chair for the past two years. She also serves as the Treasurer of the Colombian American Cultural Society Board of Directors, and was recently elected Vice-Chair of the Central Falls Prevention Coalition for substance abuse awareness and prevention. Tatiana earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Rhode Island in 2012. She belongs to several leadership groups including New Leaders Council RI, Latina Leadership Institute of RI, and Millennial RI.

Kyle Bennett, United Way of Rhode Island - Panelist, Civic Engagement

Kyle Bennett grew up in Providence, Rhode Island. He has devoted his personal and professional life to lending his time and talents in service the Rhode Island community. Kyle attended North Carolina A&T State University and Rhode Island College where he studied Secondary Education, Mathematics. He is currently the Director of the Public Policy and Research for United Way of Rhode Island. Additionally, Kyle has served as a liaison to the Olneyville Community. In this capacity he co-managed one of the organization's largest volunteer opportunities in The Back To School Celebration of Rhode Island. Prior to working for United Way, Kyle held several community based positions including Director of Black Affairs for the City of Providence and Communications Specialist for the RI Air National Guard. He has served on numerous boards and committees. Currently he is a Commissioner of the RI Housing Resources Commission and mentors students in the Year Up and City Year programs. Kyle is a Past Master of Celestial Lodge #2, Most Worshipful Prince Hall Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Rhode Island.

Marcela Betancur, Latino Policy Institute at Roger Williams University - Panelist, Civic Engagement

Marcela Betancur's early professional career began at the Providence Housing Authority where she helped lead and coordinate special programs and policies for its residents. Later, she went on to serve as the Director of Homeownership for NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley. Today, in her role as the Director of the Latino Policy Institute, Marcela works to promote and connect non-partisan data about Latinos in Rhode Island with a statewide and regional approach. Marcela proudly serves on the board of New Leaders Council as the National Program Committee Alumni Chair, after serving on the local Rhode Island board since 2014. Since 2017 she has served as the Vice President of the Rhode Island Latino Political Action Committee and Civic Fund. She also serves on the boards of New Urban Arts, Generation Citizen, and United Way of Rhode Island.

Annette Bourne, HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University - Presenter, How Housing Works

Annette Bourne is the Research & Policy Director for HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University (HWRI). She is responsible for the overall management of the research program, including the annual Housing Fact Book, which details housing affordability and its relationship to Rhode Island's economy and its impacts on health and educational outcomes. Prior to joining HWRI, she was the Training Manager for Grow Smart RI, where she oversaw the land-use training programs for municipal staff and officials. Annette holds a B.A. in Political Science from Boston University, and an A.L.M. with a Concentration in Government from the Harvard University Extension School.

Laura Brion, Childhood Lead Action Project - Panelist, Housing as Healthcare

Laura Brion is the Executive Director of the Childhood Lead Action Project. Founded in 1992, the mission of the Childhood Lead Action Project is to eliminate childhood lead poisoning through parent support, education, and advocacy.

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Brenda Clement, HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University - Moderator, How Housing Works

Brenda Clement is the Director of HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University (RWU). Prior to HousingWorks, Brenda served as Executive Director of Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) from 2012-2016. Brenda has over 25 years of experience in the housing and community development field. She previously served as Executive Director of the Housing Action Coalition of Rhode Island and Executive Director of the Housing Network of Rhode Island. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science/Economics from Providence College and a Juris Doctor from Washington College of Law at American University.

Joe Garlick, NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley - Panelist, How Housing Works

Joe Garlick has been the Executive Director of NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley since 1994. Prior to joining NWBRV, Joe worked in the Planning Department for the City of Woonsocket. He has a Masters Degree in City and Regional Planning from Rutgers University and a Bachelor's Degree in Humanities from Providence College.

Stephanie Geller, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT - Panelist, Education Advocates are Housing Advocates

Stephanie Geller is the Deputy Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. She has been a member of the Rhode Island KIDS COUNT staff since 2008, previously serving as Senior Policy Analyst responsible for policy analysis in the areas of education, poverty and family economic security. She has also served on the Annie E. Casey Foundation's national KIDS COUNT Steering Committee, as a PrepareRI Ambassador, and on the Nellie Mae Education Foundations' Speaker's Bureau. Before joining Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, Stephanie was a Research Associate at the National Center on Family Homelessness where she managed a multi-site study that examined the effectiveness of different housing and service approaches for homeless families. Previously, Stephanie was Research Director at Volunteers in Health Care and Scientist at the National Center on Substance Abuse Treatment Needs Assessment. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Wellesley College and a Master's in Education with a focus on Human Development and Psychology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Lola Herrera-Ximenez, Working Cities Newport - Panelist, Civic Engagement

Lola Herrera-Ximenez is currently working with the Working Cities Challenge in Newport. This initiative is lifting up low-income, unemployed and underrepresented residents in Newport creating system change where organizations, employers and residents can talk to each other and make more impact among residents. Her focus on this project is the Latino population in Newport. Originally, she is from Spain and she understands the challenges of immigration. Prior to this work, she was working at the University of Rhode Island in a USAID Program in Latin America and Central America. She is an active participant in the community, being part of different Boards and Commissions at the city and Island level. In her former life in Spain she was working as a scientist at the University of Barcelona where she built her passion for the ocean and the sustainability. Her actions at the community level are aimed to improve the life of people in the community and the sustainability of Aquidneck Island.

Carinel LeGrand, Rhode Island Alliance for Healthy Homes, HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University Presenter & Panelist - Housing as Healthcare

The mission of RIAHH is to align, braid and coordinate information, resources and services for improving the health, safety and energy efficiency of all Rhode Island homes. As Program Manager, Carinel LeGrand is at the center of driving that mission forward. Prior to joining the team at HousingWorks, Carinel managed Connect for Health through the Lifespan Community Health Institute. A graduate of the Public Administration Program at Roger Williams University, Mrs. LeGrand believes health equity is possible for Rhode Island through interdisciplinary advocacy and coordination.

Paula McFarland, Pawtucket Housing Authority - Moderator, Civic Engagement, Boards & Commissions

Paula McFarland has been a leader in the housing industry for over 30 years. In 2006, McFarland started her advocacy work on social services and housing for low and moderate-income Rhode Islanders working in the policy and legislative fields with the Rhode Island State Senate and the Rhode Island Community Action Association. McFarland is an active advocate for change in her community of Cranston, serving for more than 20 years as an elected official at the municipal level, Planning Commission and Zoning Board member, Cranston 2000, Cranston Senior Center Accreditation Team member, Cranston Charter School Board member and as founding member of the Cranston Citizens' Policy Academy. In February 2019, McFarland started her career as the Executive Director of the Pawtucket Housing Authority.

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Sharon Morris, OMNI Development Corporation - Panelist, How Housing Works

Sharon Morris is the Executive Director of Omni Development Corporation and has 20 years of affordable housing industry experience. Prior to joining Omni, she was the Director of Compliance at the National Equity Fund, Inc. (NEF), the largest non-profit syndicator of low income housing tax credits in the United States. In addition to NEF she has previously held positions at Rhode Island Housing and WinnResidential. Sharon grew up in South Providence, and is a graduate of Central High School. She received her B.A. Degree from Livingstone College (Salisbury, NC) and M.A. Degree from the University of Rhode Island (Kingston, RI).

Cris Potter, UPD Consulting - Panelist, Education Advocates are Housing Advocates

Cris Potter was homeless as a child. He was homeless as a young adult. Cris is an outlier.

RKG Associates - Facilitators, City of Providence Housing Strategy Session

RKG Associates is an economic, planning, and real estate consultancy with offices in Washington, DC, Boston, Atlanta, Dallas, and Durham, NH. Since its founding in 1981, RKG has built a track record of sound planning advice rooted in data, creativity, and realistic, implementable strategies. RKG's strength is in a diverse range of experiences that have helped hundreds of cities, towns and private firms make the most of spaces that matter to them.

Cynthia Roberts, Ph.D., Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence / Engage North Smithfield Panelist, Civic Engagement

Cynthia Roberts serves as Empowerment Evaluator at the RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RICADV), where she leads the evaluation of the RICADV's CDC and Prevention funded state and community level primary prevention strategies. She also serves as the Empowerment Evaluator for the Newport Health Equity Zone and provides technical assistance to local, state, and national partnering organizations. Prior to joining the RICADV in 2014, she was evaluator for the RI Department of Health's Statewide Tobacco Control Program. Roberts is Co-Chair of the RI Commission for Health Advocacy and Equity, and is Co-Founder of the resident engagement movement, Engage North Smithfield.

Corinna Roy, RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals Panelist, Housing as Healthcare

Corinna Roy, MA, is the Director of the Division of Behavioral Healthcare for Rhode Island's Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). Corinna oversees the Division's staff, new and ongoing initiatives and collaborates with sister state agencies. Corinna has a Master's Degree in cultural anthropology and a Bachelor's Degree in economics.

Jim Ryczek, Horizon Healthcare Partners, Moderator, Housing as Healthcare

Jim Ryczek joined Horizon Healthcare Partners (HHP) as the third CEO in December 2017. Under his leadership HHP was awarded the state's BH Link contract to establish a statewide 24/7 psychiatric and substance use/addiction triage center and crisis call center. He also works with the HHP partners (CODAC, Community Care Alliance, Newport Mental Health, Thrive Behavioral Health, and Tides Family Services) on management service, communications, and advocacy campaigns. Previously, he served as E.D. of the RI Coalition for the Homeless (RICH) for more than 10 years. As a professional social worker, he has worked with populations affected by homelessness, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, disability, and economic issues related to poverty and oppression.

Allegra Scharff, Central Providence Health Equity Zone, ONE Neighborhood Builders Panelist, Housing as Healthcare

Allegra Scharff is the Health Equity Project Manager at ONE Neighborhood Builders. In this role she oversees the Central Providence (formerly Olneyville) Health Equity Zone initiative which includes assessing the needs of central Providence residents and leading a collaborative of 40 CBO, healthcare agencies and residents in addressing these needs. She has conducted research with the Rhode Island Department of Corrections to intervene on health outcomes of incarcerated women and decrease recidivism upon re-entry, as well as created and run programs for children living in Pawtucket public housing developments. She received her BA from Bates College in Environmental Studies and her Masters of Public Health from Brown University.

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Wilma Smith, Voices of Homelessness - Closing Remarks

Wilma Smith's bouts with homelessness happened when she aged out of the foster care system with her child at only seventeen years old. Not only did she have to face the reality of life on the streets, she struggled with putting her child back into the same system that failed her, and for four years learned to survive on the streets of Massachusetts. This made her stronger, she went to college and visited her child, all while living in the shelter system and abiding by their rules, which wasn't easy. On her third year of homelessness she became pregnant with her second child. That was a big wake up call for Wilma. She longed for stability for her family, she then applied for housing in every city in Massachusetts. Upon her fourth year of homelessness she received a Section 8 certificate, which she remains housed with today. Wilma is currently an active member in her community. She is a chairperson of Barton Street Association, a board member of The Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation (PCF Development), and a recent graduate of Rhode Island College case management program. She is currently enrolled in the BSW program at Rhode Island College, and now working on opening her own place to help teens aging out the system.

Keith Stokes, 1696 Heritage Group - Presenter, The Struggle for African American Civil Rights in 20th Century RI

Keith Stokes has a long and distinguished career in business and community development, with degrees from Cornell University and University of Chicago. His past professional positions have included Executive Director of the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and Executive Director of the Newport County Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Stokes is a frequent national, state and local lecturer in community & regional planning, historic preservation and interpretation with an expertise in early African and Jewish American history and frequently appears on national historical programs including C-SPAN, Fox News Legends & Lies, and Ted Talk. He has been the recipient of numerous local, state and national awards.

Jacqui Tisdale, Ph.D. - Panelist, Education Advocates are Housing Advocates

Jacqui Tisdale was born and raised in Northern New Jersey. She completed her undergraduate work at Wake Forest University in 2006. Jacqui relocated to Rhode Island in 2008, where she worked in community mental health for 3 years for the May Institute in Fall River, MA prior to beginning her School Psychology PhD program. During this 4 year period, she worked as a Graduate Assistant in Disability Services for Students at URI. In 2014, she returned to Disability Services full time until her transition to the Assistant Director of Outreach and Intervention in February 2016. Her responsibilities include case management for students with non-academic difficulties, crisis management workshops for faculty and staff, community education on mental illness and other factors impacting holistic well-being for college students, and most recently, coordinating efforts to expand URI's on-campus food pantry (Rhody Outpost) in conjunction with St. Augustine church.

Jen West, Narragansett Bay Research Reserve - Presenter, Mastering Successful Meetings

Jen West has been the Coastal Training Program Coordinator with the Narragansett Bay Research Reserve since 2005. In this position, she develops and delivers training events and technical assistance programs for municipal officials and other decision-maker audiences on topics related to water quality, habitat protection, and climate change. Prior to her position at the Reserve, Jennifer worked as an environmental educator for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, was a Marine and Environmental Teaching Fellow through URI's Office of Marine Programs, and held positions at RI Sea Grant/URI Coastal Resources Center and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. Jennifer has a MS in Environmental Sciences from the University of Rhode Island and a BS in Environmental Biology from the State University of New York College at Oneonta.

Chantelle Wilkinson, Opportunity Starts at Home - Keynote & Presenter, Education Advocates are Housing Advocates

Chantelle Wilkinson works on the Opportunity Starts at Home Campaign as their National Campaign Coordinator. She previously worked in New York as a Legislative Budget Analyst for the NY state legislature. In 2016, she worked on the Breathing Lights Campaign with the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society. The campaign highlighted the issues of dilapidated vacant housing in the capital region of New York State and spurred collaboration from many sectors including the arts, community organizations, neighborhood ambassadors, project administrators, and government officials. Chantelle received her BA in Political Science with minors in Latin American/ Caribbean Studies and Spanish, and her MA in Public Administration, both from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University at Albany.

Matt Wilson, Presenter, Public Narrative for Social Change

For 36 years, Matt Wilson has organized communities, run campaigns and directed nonprofit organizations to protect the environment, celebrate the arts and creativity, and fight against unjust wars. He is currently the Executive Director of Beyond Plastics, a national organization working to phase out the use of single-use plastics.