



AGENDA

10AM WELCOME

- Remarks by **Amy Gillman**, *Senior Program Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

10:20AM-11:05AM BREAKOUTS

- **From Pilot to Policy: *The Future of Code Red in New Jersey***
New Jersey's upcoming Code Red Pilot Program will launch in five counties, marking a critical step in strengthening homelessness prevention and crisis response systems. This session will break down what communities can expect during implementation, how case management systems may evolve, and where operational challenges are likely to arise. Experts in homelessness prevention and case management will share insights on improving the proposed framework, identifying gaps, and preparing for real-world application. Participants will also explore strategies for evaluating the pilot, shaping improvements, and building advocacy momentum toward a permanent, statewide Code Red program.
Moderator: Jaymie Santiago, President & CEO, New Brunswick Tomorrow
Speakers: Taiisa Kelly, CEO, Monarch Housing Associates; Richard Uniacke, President, Bridges Outreach; Naomi Lesnewski, Program Director, Hudson County Division of Housing & Community Development
- **Power & Profit: *The Impact of AI Data Centers in Our Communities***
As AI data centers rapidly expand across the country, communities are grappling with the local impacts of massive energy demand, water usage, land development, and infrastructure strain. For low- and moderate-income (LMI) neighborhoods, these projects raise urgent questions about environmental justice, equity, and long-term community sustainability. This session will explore community-level efforts to shape or challenge data center development, featuring perspectives from local organizers, statewide advocates, and government officials. Participants will learn what tools and resources exist to help communities understand proposed projects, weigh in effectively, and advocate for equitable outcomes. We'll also examine what this emerging industry means for the future of energy efficiency, housing stability, and environmental justice organizing.
Moderator: Edward Bethea, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Gateway Community Action Partnership
Speakers: Charlie Kratovil, Central Jersey Organizer at Food & Water Watch, Thomas Ikeda, Director, Center for the Urban Environment at the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University, Al-Tariq Witcher, Managing Director of External Affairs, Fair Share Housing Center

A Clean Slate: Ensuring Habitability for New Jersey Residents

Habitability remains an essential piece of a home being safe and healthy for the residents that live within it. As historic and emerging social determinants of health continue to impact low-to-moderate income residents it is more important than ever to ensure that those living within homes facing habitability issues are aware of their rights, and what options are possible to strengthen them. Network members and allies will detail priority legislation currently proposed around unit habitability, in addition to on-the-ground successes that have allowed their follow community members to live in a safe, healthy, and affordable home.

Moderator: **Cierra Hart**, Director of Housing and Economic Justice for the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence

Speakers: **Miosha Lawrence**, Homeownership Coordinator, Parkside Business and Community in Partnership; **Eida Altman**, Executive Director, Denver Metro Tenants Union

11:05AM-11:10AM Coffee Break

11:10AM-11:55AM Financing the Field: Resources Available for Healthy Homes and Communities Work

Join organizations working in the healthy homes and communities' field to learn about current and upcoming opportunities to support your work. This session will highlight a range of resources, from funding opportunities to technical assistance, offered by statewide and regional partners to help advance healthier homes and communities.

Moderator: **Zoila Jennings**, Lead Impact Investment Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Speakers: – **Jorge Cruz**, executive direct, LISC New Jersey; **Colleen McCauley**, Camden Coalition Director of Policy and Advocacy; **Chanse Sonsalla**, Applied Research Manager, Community Opportunity Alliance

11:55AM-12:00pm Closing Remarks

BIOS

Edward Bethea serves as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Gateway Community Action Partnership. He oversees all financial, managerial and revenue-generating departments and activities within the agency. He is the chief negotiator of all contracts and leases and serves as chief developer on all construction projects. He is responsible for the Operations, Finance and Human Resources Departments as well as, Head Start, Health Services, Economic Development, Social Services, Information Technology, Weatherization, Property Management and Facility Maintenance. He brings years of experience in tax consulting, financial planning, cash flow projection and asset management to Gateway, and maintains approval authority on all agency spending. He is also directly responsible for the interactions between Gateway and financial institutions and governmental entities. Mr. Bethea currently serves as President of the Bridgeton City Municipal Council and joined the Network Board of Directors in 2020.

Jorge Cruz is the executive director of LISC New Jersey, overseeing a longstanding community investment program that has directed over \$169 million to support economic opportunity in New Jersey. With a background deeply rooted in impact investing and community development, Jorge previously served as Vice President at Citizens Bank, focusing on financial services for underbanked communities and leading their Community Reinvestment Act strategies. His extensive career spans nearly three decades, including roles as chief external affairs officer for New Jersey Community Capital and executive director of Garden State Episcopal CDC. During his tenure at LISC, Jorge managed annual commitments exceeding \$22 million, pioneering initiatives such as the New Jersey CDFI Capital Growth Fund and LISC's Entrepreneurs of Color Fund. He also played a key role in establishing the New Jersey Child Care & Early Learning Fund and expanding LISC's Financial Opportunity Center model across new communities. Outside of work, Jorge actively contributes to local organizations, serving on boards including Triple C Housing and La Casa de Don Pedro. He volunteers on advisory councils such as the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey and the Jegna Advisory Council for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Jorge holds a B.S. in sociology from the College of New Jersey and resides in North Brunswick with his wife, Ivonne, and their son, Sammy.

Amy Gillman is a senior program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation where she leads national efforts to advance equitable community development policy and practice, including surfacing and tackling structural racism in the sector; motivating investment in marginalized communities; addressing displacement of existing residents as an unintended consequence of investment; and elevating community ownership and wealth building strategies. She also leads RWJF's housing strategy in New Jersey, which seeks to ensure access to affordable housing in thriving neighborhoods where residents choose to live. Previously, Gillman was a national program director at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation where she integrated health equity into community development practice and financed healthy food and early childhood facilities. She also held several positions in social welfare policy and international community development

in N.Y. and Washington, D.C. Gillman earned a BA from Wesleyan University and a master's degree in public and private management from Yale University.

Cierra Hart is the Director of Housing and Economic Justice for the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence and a national consultant for the National Network to End Domestic Violence's Housing Consortium. Her role sees her providing advocacy, training, technical assistance, public awareness, and support for advocates and survivors. She has been involved in various federal, state, and local housing and economic justice advocacy and policy initiatives to help survivors heal, restore, and renew their lives. Ms. Hart's work has been instrumental in expanding survivors' access to housing statewide, as well as in creating a hotel aggregator program in March of 2020 to house survivors and children fleeing from domestic violence during the global pandemic. She has worked with many communities in the areas of homelessness prevention, emergency and transitional housing, domestic violence program development, community development, eviction prevention, and rental assistance programs.

Thomas Ikeda is the Director of the Center for the Urban Environment at the John S. Watson Institute for Urban Policy and Research at Kean University. There, he works with grassroots environmental justice organizations and partner groups to advance environmental justice in New Jersey and across the nation. Before joining the Watson Institute, Thomas worked at the Tishman Environment and Design Center, researching energy and climate mitigation policy around the US. He also worked as a research fellow with the New York Panel on Climate Change, investigating the equity implications of NYC's climate resiliency investments and strategies post-Hurricane Sandy. Thomas holds a Master's Degree in Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management from The New School. Prior to entering the field of research, policy, and environmental justice, he worked in Canada as a consulting arborist after earning a Bachelor's Degree in Urban Forestry from the University of British Columbia.

Zoila Jennings is Lead Impact Investment Officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). She focuses on deploying catalytic capital and designing investment frameworks that strengthen community-led solutions, particularly in low-income and historically excluded communities. Before joining RWJF, Zoila built a career centered on social justice, poverty alleviation, and community financing. She has written extensively on how philanthropy and impact investing can better support "proximate leaders" — those whose lived experience gives them unique insight into their communities. Under her leadership, RWJF has made program-related investments (PRIs) to channel capital into underserved areas. A Dominican Republic native raised in Queens, New York, Zoila often shares how her personal journey shaped her commitment to equitable investment.

Taiisa Kelly is the Chief Executive Officer of Monarch Housing Associates joining the organization in March of 2006. She has experience in housing development working with federal, state and local funding sources to secure financing for special needs housing projects. In October of 2007, Ms. Kelly joined the Ending Homelessness Team

where she works with local governments, nonprofits and community stakeholders to develop coordinated strategies to end homelessness. On January 1, 2019, she was appointed as CEO. She has extensive experience in working with community stakeholders on homeless planning activities. As a member of the Ending Homelessness Team Ms. Kelly guides communities through the process of developing 10 year plans to end homelessness and has completed 3 community plans in the past 2 years. Ms. Kelly received her B.A. in psychology and anthropology from Rutgers University.

Charlie Kratovil is the Central Jersey Organizer at Food & Water Watch, where he fights against water privatization, fossil fuel infrastructure projects, and large-scale artificial intelligence data centers. In 2022, Charlie was honored to receive the “Environmental Legacy Award” from the New Jersey Environmental Lobby for his advocacy for improved air quality, and his leadership of a successful campaign to stop the plans to build a polluting power plant in the Keasbey section of Woodbridge. Most recently, he spearheaded the movement to defeat a proposed redevelopment plan that would have allowed for the construction of a data center near homes and businesses in New Brunswick.

Miosha Lawrence joined Parkside Business and Community in Partnership in 2001. She is PBCIP’s Homeownership Coordinator with responsibility for PBCIP’s Hope Institute homebuyer education program. Miosha is responsible for creating the program, securing funding and teaching three Hope Institute sessions per year. To date, over 1000 clients have graduated from PBCIP’s Hope Institute. Miosha also works one-on-one program participants, guiding them through the home buying process and helping buyers to set personal financial goals in order to reach their ultimate goal of home ownership. Miosha has a bachelor’s degree in law and justice from Rowan University. Miosha is also a HUD Certified Housing Counselor and NeighborWorks Certified: Homeownership Counselor, Pre-Purchase Counselor, Post-Purchase Counselor and Foreclosure Intervention/Default Counselor.

Naomi Lesnewski is the Program Director of Homelessness Program at the Hudson County Division of Housing and Community Development. She oversees several funding sources at the federal, state, and local levels and participates in strategic policy and development work. She grew up in Jersey City and is passionate about serving the community in which she was raised.

Colleen McCauley is the Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Camden Coalition. A longtime nurse and public health professional, she previously led children’s health policy and advocacy efforts at Children First in Philadelphia and helped direct care at an award-winning community health center. At the Camden Coalition, she co-leads work supporting state and community agencies in the NJ FamilyCare Housing Supports Program and directs a project with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families

focused on strengthening child protective services through performance evaluation and analysis.

Jaymie Santiago has been working for the progress of New Brunswick's residents since 2004. He began his work with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension and was instrumental in creating a citywide network of Food Hubs consisting of farmers' markets and community gardens. In 2009, he served on the initial planning committee that developed the New Brunswick Community Food Alliance. And in 2011, he was the Co-Director of Rutgers Against Hunger, a university-wide initiative offering temporary relief to families faced with hunger across New Jersey. Mr. Santiago joined New Brunswick Tomorrow as Director of Operations in 2012, becoming President in 2016. He managed the Healthier New Brunswick initiative; designed to improve the overall health of city residents.

Chanse Sonsalla joined the Community Opportunity Alliance in June 2022. Her primary responsibilities include supporting the Grounding Values in Research program and coordinating the Alliance's research initiatives. She is passionate about research, data use, and lifelong learning. Chanse is excited to contribute her commitment to service and community development to the Alliance. Chanse has experience in many different education and development settings. As a certified English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, she volunteered with her university's ESL mission, and has continued to help develop academic community events to support learning for all ages and educational environments. She previously served as a Peace Corps Education Volunteer, teaching English and Economics to secondary students in Bunumbu, Sierra Leone. More recently, she helped to revise and implement digital literacy curricula with Baker Ripley in Houston, Texas. She is currently working on completing her thesis and final academic year in the Masters of Sociology program at Illinois State University.

Richard Uniacke is the President at Bridges Outreach, Inc, with offices in Summit, Rahway, and Newark, NJ, and has been working to solve homelessness since joining Bridges in May of 2018. Bridges currently serves Essex, Union, and Somerset Counties, providing Street Outreach services, including the 24/7/365 outreach program in Newark and intensive housing case management focused on both pre-tenancy and tenancy sustaining support. Bridges is the proud Region 2 provider for Bringing Veterans Home and is a vocal advocate and defender our neighbors facing homelessness and housing insecurity. Prior to joining Bridges, Richard worked on food insecurity for 17 years at the Community FoodBank of New Jersey in myriad roles. He lives in Scotch Plains, NJ, is notoriously full of energy, loves to spend as much time as possible outside, and enjoys performing on stage. He holds a BA in Communication from Kean University and an MBA from NJIT.

Al-Tariq Witcher is Managing Director of External Affairs, wherein he coordinates FSHC's work on policy, communication and organizing. Prior to joining FSHC, Tariq spent the last 14 years in the advocacy space in New Jersey, focusing his efforts around justice impacted individuals, at-risk youth and underserved populations. He co-founded the Returning Citizens Support Group, and has also held other key roles at

New Jersey Together, Rutgers University and Catholic Charities. His academic achievements include an AA in Paralegal Studies from Essex County College and a BS in Criminal Justice with a minor in Legal Studies from Rutgers University.