



# 2023 Steering Committee Elections

Candidate Speeches – Voting ends December 1<sup>st</sup>

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The NYC CoC Steering Committee provides overall leadership to ensure the CoC carries out its vision and meets all HUD mandates and requirements. The Steering Committee provides direction to, and coordinates the efforts of, CoC Committees; approves and sets policy priorities; and communicates with the public and external stakeholders to build their understanding of homelessness and the solutions required to prevent and eradicate it. The Steering Committee votes on operation-focused and strategic matters, while all votes tied to funding decisions and ranking priorities are made by the Independent Review Team.

**The following parties are eligible to vote in the Steering Committee elections:**

- One (1) vote per CoC-funded organization
- One (1) vote per Youth Action Board member
- One (1) vote per Persons with Lived Experience Committee member
- One (1) vote per current CoC Steering Committee member

*\*If you represent more than one of the parties listed above you are only eligible to vote once. Additionally, if you are competing in the elections, you are welcome to vote for yourself.*

**Voting ends Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**Results announced on Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.**

If you have questions, please contact Jonathan Martinez at [martinezjo@dss.nyc.gov](mailto:martinezjo@dss.nyc.gov).

# List of Candidates

	First name	Last name	Organization	Seat
1	DeBoRah	Dickerson	n/a	At-Large
2	Dr. Robyn	Frye	n/a	At-Large
3	Jha'asryel-Akquil	Bishop	Street Lives	At-Large
4	Lauren	Velez	CSH	At-Large
5	Johnson Eweka	Eboigbe	Johnson Organization Foundation	At-Large
6	R.Shanet	Dunovant	n/a	At-Large
7	Vivian	Louie	Community Housing Innovations	At-Large
8	Dinick	Martinez	n/a	At-Large
9	Eric	Lee	Homeless Services United	Coalition
10	Nicole	McVinua	Association for Community Living	Coalition
11	Amy	Wilkerson	DYCD	Government
12	Anthony (Tony)	Lee	DOHMH	Government
13	Meghan	Smith	DHS	Government
14	Gina	Cappuccitti	New Destiny Housing Corporation	Non-profit
15	Howard	Charton	Breaking Ground	Non-profit
16	Joskary	Diaz	Bailey House/Housing Works	Non-profit
17	Nicole (Nikki)	Grant	Housing Plus	Non-profit
18	Shearon	Joseph	FACES NY	Non-profit
19	Maddox	Guerilla	Ali Forney Center	Non-profit
20	Cameron	Craig	n/a	PWLEx (G)
21	Elizabeth	Mackey	n/a	PWLEx (G)
22	Ulysses Peter	Malvan	n/a	PWLEx (G)
23	Judy	Romer	n/a	PWLEx (G)
24	Philip	Malebranche	n/a	PWLEx (G)
25	Rose	Torcel	n/a	PWLEx (G)
26	William	Stanford	n/a	PWLEx (G)
27	Shandra	Rogers	n/a	PWLEx (Y)
28	Phoenix	McKinnon	n/a	PWLEx (Y)

# (1) DeBoRah Dickerson

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Seat – At-Large

My name is DeBoRah Dickerson. I have been involved with Continuum for several years. In the PWLE Committee was the secretary about 1 year and half on the PQI committee a few years. Was on the Steering Committee about 2018 when the revision started. A delegate NY Chapter US Labor Against Militarism. Traveled to South Korea to speak about homeless in US. Represented Life Experience Faith Sharing Associates to NGO at UN addressing the unhoused and the conditions in the US and NYC. I stressed the lack of deeply affordable housing is a problem for marginalize people communities. I reminded them that if people not financial stable there's a hardships with housing themselves. Thus more families and youth are becoming more unhoused these days. I had opportunity to visit Hamburg, Germany speak to refugees. I viewed their Department of Homeless there. I spoke to International World Women Day in Canada 2010 address homelessness in USA, the effects of unhoused women. Active member in Homes 4 All, former board member of Picture the Homeless, Picture the Homeless Oral History Project, Life Experience Faith Sharing Associates, Divine Faith Christian Alliance chaplain, and presently board member of East Harlem El-Barrio Community Land Trust. My final remark I use " Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country President John F Kennedy.

# (2) Robyn Frye

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Seat – At-Large

Good Day New York City Continuum of Care (CoC) Steering Committee Applicant Review Team!

My name is Dr. Robyn Frye and I am the President and CEO of Practice of Peace Foundation Inc. and while my resume is filled with over 35 years experience in non-profit work, I believe the most important things I can share about myself are more personal than professional as a potential "Person with Lived Experience" (PWLE) At-large Steering Committee Applicant. It is my hope that you will hear from my life, the knowledge and compassion necessary to contribute to the CoC Steering Committee even as an at-large member.

I was born and raised in New York City and I attended Catholic schools from kindergarten to high school...I know! That should be enough for consideration (chuckle and smile). For the most part my childhood was filled with all the wonderful and unique opportunities that growing up in NYC offers. However, life can and did bring swift transitions and traumas that later led to several years of a nightmarish addiction and homelessness. So what I'd like to share with you for consideration as a PWLE at-large Steering Committee applicant comes from a place of pain, hopelessness, resiliency and compassion. My memories of life on the street will always undergird my work in supporting people in need and in addressing the issues of the homeless community. Over the years my recovery and education has exposed me to the myriad of

systems disconnects that now drive my ambition to be a part of the solution. I believe what I would bring to the work of the CoC committee would be; the unique perspective of knowing what is most important to offer the homeless; which is hope, as well as, understanding the need for accountability in funding and policy work. There is no denying that this work isn't one of the most challenging issues of our city and country, nevertheless the steadfastness of CoC and all of its committee members lay a foundation and landmark for change.

So for me it's clear. If I can capstone my life and career with an opportunity to serve alongside others who remain committed to end homelessness or have lived and survived traumas, mental health illnesses, loneliness, isolation and survived to be a part of social change, then please consider me.

*"For this life, I only ask that I be given the chance to live with selfless ambition."*  
Dr. Robyn Frye

## (3) Jha'asryel-Akquil Bishop

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Seat – At-large

I am honored and humbled to be here today, and I thank you for your consideration of my application. I am Jha'asryel-Akquil Bishop, a writer, social research consultant and philanthropic advisor who is passionate about preventing and ending homelessness and improving the lives of vulnerable New Yorkers. I am here to share with you my vision and goals for the NYC CoC, and why I believe I can be a valuable asset to this committee.

I have a personal and professional background that gives me a unique perspective and insight into the issues and challenges that we face as a CoC. I was born and raised in Guyana, where I faced discrimination and violence because of my gender identity and expression. In 2016, I sought asylum in the U.S. and experienced homelessness in New York City, I also experienced housing instability and homelessness in North Carolina (2021-2022). I know firsthand the hardships and barriers that youth and young adults experiencing homelessness face, and I have overcome them with resilience and determination. I have also used my voice to advocate for myself and others, sharing my story in various platforms and publications.

I have been involved in several research projects and initiatives that aim to understand and address the needs and gaps of the homelessness system. For example, I was part of the team that conducted the first rapid, mixed-methods assessment of the services and supports available to youth experiencing homelessness in New York City. I have also collaborated with Chapin Hall at University of Chicago, Point Source Youth, and New York City Fund to End Youth and Family Homelessness, a national network of social innovators supporting solutions to homelessness, to design and implement direct cash transfers programs for youth experiencing homelessness in New York City. I have a keen insight into the data, policies and best practices that can inform and improve the work of the NYC CoC.

But more than that, I have a strong commitment and vision for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the

homelessness sector. I believe that DEI is not only a moral imperative, but also a strategic necessity for the success and sustainability of the CoC. I have been a leader and a role model in promoting DEI practices throughout all aspects of the CoC, including Steering Committee membership and representation among CoC-funded agencies and their leadership structures. I have also been vocal and active in addressing the systemic racism and oppression that underlie homelessness, especially for people of color and immigrants. I have participated in protests and movements that demand justice and accountability for the victims of police brutality and state violence, and an end to the criminalization and institutional of people experiencing homelessness.

As a member of the NYC CoC, my vision is to create a more inclusive, equitable and effective system that can prevent and end homelessness for all. I hope to expand on the contributions I made as a Member and Co-Chair of the Youth Action Board, and former Co-Chair of the NYC CoC.

## (5) Johnson Eweka Eboigbe

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Seat – At-Large

With my 13 years Experience in ADVOCATING and LOBBYING for the HOMELESS to NEW YORK STATE MEMBERS OF ASSEMBLY and NEW YORK STATE MEMBERS of SENATES IN ALBANY and in Washington DC, To our members of CONGRESS and Members of the SENATE to increase FUNDING ALLOCATIONS to FIGHTING or ENDING HOMELESSNESS all over the United states in general and IN NEW YORK STATE and NEW YORK in Particular has yielded a great impart in funding, when the BIDEN-HARRIS administration increases homeless ALLOCATIONS to \$2.1 Billion in 2022 and to \$3.8 Billion for 2023 Fiscal year. Due to the efforts and advocacy created by nonprofit leaders LIKE myself.

Morealso, My education, tactic, skills and strategic expertise in fund raising was from my been a member of the association of fundraising professionals. (AFP). For over 13 years now.

I have been fighting for the reduction or generally eliminating homeless in the USA in general and in new York city in particular. With this I am hundred percent sure thst the CoC will vote for me, because I have a tremendous amount of wealth of experience, knowledge, skills and expertise to continue to bring a great wealth of VALUE to the CoC Community At-Large.

Finally, I know that I am THE BEST CANDIDATE TO OCCUPY THIS SEAT, because I know that no other candidates or my competitors for this seat can compete with my level of leadership EDUCATION, experience, skills, connections in government partnerships, and knowledge that I had acquired in my past 13 years as a nonprofit, nonpartisan organizational leader.

With these, I am highly convinced that the members of the CoC Network will Vote for me. They will Also love having me around as a friend and business partner. Because I am a living likable and easy to get along individual.

Thank you all.

May God Continue to bless us all.

## (6) Richardene Shanet Dunovant

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Seat – At-Large

Hello I am a Richardene Shanet Dunovant and I am running for a seat on the NYCCOC Steering Committee as an Individual At-Large member.

In 2004, I was a voting member of the NYC CCOC Steering Committee representing DV.

While residing in the shelter, and being on the NYC CCOC committee, I earned my Real Estate license. I was then hired by the shelter provider to give lectures on fair housing rights. I was a part of the initial Fair Housing Justice Center.

In 2020 during the pandemic, through a series of unfortunate events, I became homeless and again had to use NYC services. This time was much more harsh.

With a multi-focused perspective, I was able to see the differences in the system in regards to improvements and challenges of the current system compared to 20 years ago. I paid attention to the state of homelessness and the level of services given to solve the problem.

Has the system gotten better, worse, or stayed the same. I'd like to have an input to help close the gaps that I saw and experienced, and to help improve the system for the future.

Because of my experience with being a voting member of the NYC Continuum of Care, being recent but formerly homeless, working for a provider organization, and being a real estate agent, I believe I have a well-rounded perspective on causes, solutions, and the process of permanently ending homelessness

I see the problems, challenges, and solutions from 4 perspectives that include:

1. Clients that need humane, smart, and useful solutions to a variety of issues that may include mental health or substance abuse along with permanent housing needs.
2. Providers with organizations that want to help implement and provide those services.
3. The Continuum that realistically creates a process to fund the idealistic goal of ending homelessness in New York City permanently
4. As a Real Estate agent, I see the housing market in regards to fair market rents and costs, dealing with landlords' perspectives, etc.

I have ideas and idealistic yet realistic goals that I believe can end homelessness, or at the very least be implemented to help streamline the process to be faster, easier, smarter, and more cost effective for all involved.

We can end and preferably prevent expensive chronic and short term homelessness in New York City

Please vote for me R. Shanet Dunovant!

## (7) Vivian Louie

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Seat – At-Large

"Housing is a human right" is one of my guiding principles. I've dedicated thirty years to housing and homelessness issues with the grand mission of finding the formula to end homelessness and I'm eager to be a part of the Coalition to further this mission.

I started my journey as a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity which enlightened me to the plight of unhoused families. When I realized the challenges some of us face to have a place called home and the security of a warm meal every day, I plunged into advocacy and organizing work during my college years. One of my first jobs was a community organizer in Detroit where I organized young adults to fight for better education and safer schools. I moved to San Francisco and supervised a subsidized housing program for formerly homeless individuals. I came back to NYC and managed supportive housing and affordable housing development initiatives as the Director of Operations of a small non-profit in NYC's westside. Shortly after, I was appointed Assistant Commissioner for the Department of Homeless Services for 2 years, and then Assistant Commissioner for the Department of Housing Preservation and Development for 15 years. Today, I am the chief housing officer for a non-profit housing organization serving 8 NY counties. My path has shown me a thousand shades of humanity, how we can do better for one another, and the role I can play.

I offer unique perspectives and insights into policies and procedures, practice and methodologies, performance evaluations, critical thinking and strategic planning for services to families and individuals facing adversity and unthinkable challenges. I hope to join the Coalition to work side by side with the most innovative minds and devoted hearts in the pursuit of human dignity.

## (9) Eric Lee

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Seat – Coalition

Homeless Services United (HSU) is a coalition of New York City's mission-driven non-profit homeless services providers helping families and individuals at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. Our members operate street outreach programs, drop-ins, safe havens, family and single adult shelters, as well as Homebase and eviction prevention programs. HSU advocates for expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers. HSU's relies on the experience and insight of our non-profit direct service providers to synthesize policy and process recommendations and improvements to improve services for people experiencing the trauma of homelessness. If elected, HSU would continue to message back recommendations and concerns from our diverse membership to the

steering committee to help it continue to have as informed a perspective as possible on both granular and big-picture issues.

## (10) Nicole McVinua, ACL

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Seat – Coalition

Good morning. I'm Nicole McVinua. Thank you for the opportunity to reapply for a Coalition seat on behalf of the Association for Community Living (ACL).

I work as the Director of Policy at Urban Pathways, and I currently represent ACL on the CoC's Steering Committee. I joined the Committee in January 2022, though ACL has been represented for a number of years. ACL is an established statewide membership organization of more than 100 nonprofit organizations who provide housing and mental health services to more than 35,000 people diagnosed with serious and persistent psychiatric disabilities. New York City's ACL member organizations provide approximately 17,000 supportive housing beds in New York City alone that serve a wide range of populations. In addition to the Steering Committee, ACL members serve on several CoC committees.

My experience uniquely positions me to make a positive contribution to the CoC. Urban Pathways provides a full continuum of services to single adults, from street outreach to permanent supportive housing, and is a recipient of CoC funding, so I have an understanding of a variety of pathways that people experiencing homelessness move through the system to reach permanent housing, and the challenges in that process. I represent Urban Pathways on a variety of campaigns with our coalition partners, including ACL to advocate for systemic changes and improvements to services.

I also facilitate our organization's Advocacy Program, which includes meeting with people with lived experience regularly to discuss their policy concerns related to homelessness, affordable housing, and mental health services. The feedback I get from this group drives our advocacy decisions and provides me with direct feedback on what is or is not working on the ground. This feedback led to our proposal for the Key to Home initiative, a rapid rehousing program to move people directly from the street into an apartment, that was funded by the CoC in the most recent funding cycle. I believe these connections and experiences will allow me to make a positive contribution to the Steering Committee. Thank you very much for your consideration.

## (11) Amy Wilkerson

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Seat - Government

My name is Amy Wilkerson. I am the Assistant Commissioner of Runaway and Homeless Youth Services at the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). DYCD funds a continuum of programs to support youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. We fund 8 drop-in centers, 50 residential sites providing crisis and transitional independent living



programs and two street outreach programs. DYCD has long partnered with the NYC CoC to coordinate resources between DYCD and CoC programs.

DYCD is the lead organization in the YHDP initiative named Opportunity Starts with a Home. DYCD was at the forefront of creating the initiative and now steering and monitoring the outcomes. Representatives from DYCD participate in the YYA RRH Workgroup to collaboratively create a coordinated entry process for youth exiting DYCD programs to enter rapid rehousing apartments. DYCD has historically participated in the CoC in committees such as youth, evaluation, CAPS and steering. DYCD is the organizer of the annual Youth Count. If selected DYCD will continue to partner with the CoC to enhance services and support from people experiencing homelessness in New York City.

As the primary representative of DYCD that will fulfill the obligation of government steering committee member, my lived and professional experience make me a suitable candidate. Before joining DYCD, I spent 25 years as a provider who worked alongside children, youth and families experiencing homelessness. I have worked in family shelters, youth shelters, drop-in centers and other adjacent program types that directly provided support services to people experiencing homelessness. My professional purpose is to ensure programs, systems work effectively, are anti-oppressive practices and reduce trauma. If selected, I as well as any designee will contribute productively and work tirelessly towards the goal of ending homelessness for all New Yorkers.

## (12) Anthony (Tony) Lee

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Seat – Government

DOHMH has been developing and supporting the development of supportive housing since the first programs were opened more than 30 years ago. Over these years, DOHMH portfolio has grown to serve more than 11,000 families, individuals and young adults who are living in supportive housing. Our partnership with the CoC has supported this growth. The experience gained in providing technical assistance and program monitoring to programs as they have developed over the last decades has enhanced the development of new programs such as NY 15/15. DOHMH continues to work with providers on developing programs that are focused on supporting healthy and fully recovered lives for all the individuals, families and young adults they serve. DOHMH has managed the NY/NY III evaluation, which showed the major savings that come from supportive housing, and we continue to bring our epidemiology expertise to the evaluation that will be conducted on the new NY 15/15 housing. The DOHMH-CoC partnership strengthens the development of supportive housing throughout the city.

## (14) Gina Cappuccitti

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Seat – Non-profit

As a member of the NYC CoC Steering Committee, I plan to uplift the perspectives of domestic violence survivors and contribute the expertise gained by New Destiny. For nearly 30 years, New Destiny has been the only organization in the city dedicated solely to the solution of permanent housing for survivors. This started with a focus on permanent supportive housing and has expanded to include rapid-rehousing to assist survivors in securing safe, permanent housing.

As the first domestic violence rapid-rehousing program in NYC, New Destiny continues its commitment to expanding access to funding for other programs serving survivors. This year, when it was announced that no new DV RRH programs were selected for funding by HUD, in spite of four new projects being included on last year's collaborative application, New Destiny supported outreach efforts made by the CoC to connect with potential new project applicants and offer support prior to this year's NOFO submission. This advocacy resulted in an even larger number of new DV RRH project applications. As NYC's largest EHV Housing Navigation team, New Destiny has elevated our expertise in securing permanent housing for survivors, having placed over 700 EHV recipients in permanent housing between the EHV HN and our rapid-rehousing programs.

To meet the growing need for aftercare support, New Destiny secured private funding to launch a Housing Stability Services department and brought on a Director of Mental Health Services in 2023, so that the organization can build on its commitment to break the cycle of homelessness and abuse. New Destiny launched the Survivor Voices Project and its Spanish-speaking equivalent, Voces de Cambio, in 2023 to create opportunities for survivors to exercise their agency. Many of you were able to see the results of this through the survivor speakers and panelists at New Destiny's symposium last month. Their involvement reflects a deep commitment to integrating survivors' feedback into the work that we do.

New Destiny has been a CoC recipient since 2019 and has been actively contributing to CoC efforts through our involvement as founding members of the CoC DV Committee and DV RRH Working Group, as well as participation in the PQI Subcommittee and the CAPS Committee. New Destiny's involvement in the coordinated entry pilot in partnership with ENDGBV and CoC further reflects our commitment to advancing the shared goals of creating equitable access to services.

The combination of direct service, training, and advocacy experience that New Destiny offers at the intersection of homelessness and domestic violence would make our contributions to the Steering Committee invaluable.

## (15) Howard Charton

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Seat - Non-profit

Established in 1990 as a not-for-profit housing and community development organization, Breaking Ground's mission is to strengthen individuals, families, and communities by developing and sustaining exceptional supportive and affordable housing as well as programs for homeless and other vulnerable New Yorkers. Today, Breaking Ground is New York City's leading provider of permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and street outreach services to chronically street homeless,

formerly homeless, and low-income New Yorkers. We are the largest permanent supportive housing provider in New York State, managing nearly 12% of the supportive housing units in NYC. From the streets to a safe, affordable, supportive home, our programs and housing touch the lives of more than 8,000 people each year.

Breaking Ground owns and/or operates nearly 4,200 permanent supportive and affordable housing units across 20 buildings. Our Street Outreach teams operate 24/7 in Brooklyn, Queens, and Midtown Manhattan, and our Safe Havens offer 589 transitional housing units. Across our programs, Breaking Ground uses a Housing First approach to connect our clients with stable housing as quickly as possible. We recently opened 90 Sands Street in Brooklyn, which offers 490 Affordable and supportive housing (305 units of supported NY 15/15). Working with New York City and our partner CUCS, we expedited the housing process to fill all 305 units within six months of opening. Breaking Ground continues to increase the affordable and supportive housing available to New Yorkers.

Due to our multifaceted roles ranging from outreach provider to property manager to supportive housing developer, Breaking Ground has a unique perspective to offer the NYC CCoC. We continuously evaluate our work in this field, using our findings to contribute to the knowledge base. Breaking Ground is eager to use decades of experience and continue to support the CoC.

Breaking Ground has been a provider representative on the NYC CoC Steering Committee since 2020. We currently serve as Co-Chair of The CoC Steering Committee and Co-Chair of the Performance Management Committee. We participate in the Governance Committee, the Data Management Work Group, and various Ad HOC work groups as needed. As an organization, we have also participated in the CAPS subcommittee and evaluation committee and have formerly participated in the SOAR income access work Group. Before being elected to the Steering Committee, Breaking Ground served as the alternative representative for The Network on the Steering Committee, the Network continues to serve as a coalition member on the Steering Committee.

Breaking Ground's Executive Director serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Supportive Housing Network of New York (The Network). Breaking Ground is also a member of the New York Housing Conference (NYHC), Homeless Services United (HSU), the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the NYS Association for Affordable Housing (NYSAAFAH), and Metro-IAF. Additionally, our COO was on the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice's Crisis Prevention and Response Task Force, which was charged with developing a comprehensive citywide strategy to prevent mental health and related substance use crises.

Working for Breaking Ground for almost 15 years, I have served and been present in the NYC CoC for the last five years, serving as Co-Chair for the last two years. I previously represented Breaking Ground on The Westchester County CoC as an At Large member and Veterans Representative (at the time managing a veterans transitional housing program associated with the Veterans Administration). With the wealth of knowledge that exists within Breaking Ground, I ask for your vote to continue to represent providers on the CoC Steering Committee

# (16) Joskary Diaz

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Seat – Non-profit

I am writing to you with interest in obtaining a position on the NYC CoC Steering committee, I apply last year and I'm grateful to be given another opportunity to apply for the committee. I will be grateful to join the NYC CoC Steering committee with your vote! I believe I would be a great asset to the committee and will bring my education, professional, and personal experiences to team, in hopes to help with creating goals and accomplishing them. I have my MSW and have 10+ years working with services for the unhoused, mental illness, and chronic health condition population. I have been working with the Housing Department for over 9+ years, I'm the Director of Scatter-site Supportive Housing at Housing Works/Bailey House. In this role, I oversee 160 units, and we serve singles and families that are eligible for the program.

I have the pleasure of working with different projects that are funded by the CoC, within my 9 years of working in the Housing Department. One of the Housing program, was a one congregate setting for Chronically homeless, and clients that are struggling with mental illness at Case Renacer with the Bridge. I'm currently supporting the SHIP program at Bailey House/Housing Works as the Housing Director.

Quality affordable housing is a right, I want to be able to continue to support housing by participating in committees that promotes change. One of the main reasons why I focus my career in housing, was to advocate for the unhoused population in NYC. We are unable to actively work on any other needs, without a roof over our head. Housing is essential and it provides shelter, it is our home, our safe haven. Since, I been working with the unhouse population, I continue to practice the housing first model and would like to participate in the committee to discuss strategies, resources and bring different expertise of congregate and scatter-site settings. I'm open to learn, listen, refer and assess ideas in collaboration with the committee members, in order to make positive impact and necessary changes. Through my current role as a Housing Director, I have had the opportunity to oversee two programs and understand of the administrative needs for funding. I'm the co-chair of Integration Committee at our Housing Department and I have full confidence that I will be able to provide education, assessment tools, and an evidence-based practice point of view to assist the committee to complete task and achieve goals.

In addition to my work experience, I was able to be part of the SEED project, which is nationwide program that aims to seek educational equity and diversity. I continue to use the perspective and awareness obtained from SEED in my everyday work. I am involved in several committees at Bailey House/Housing Works, for employees during the beginning of our merger, benefits. and would love to further advance in professional development. Throughout my career I have worked in New Paltz community, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. I have been a constant advocate for the unhoused community throughout my career and hope to have the opportunity to advocate on a larger scale as a COC Steering Committee member.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Joskary Diaz, MSW

## (17) Nikki Grant

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Seat – Non-profit

Good morning Steering Committee, Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs, Community partners and visitors. My name is Dr. Nikki Grant and I am the VP of Justice Initiatives and Advocacy at HousingPlus. In my current role, I oversee SHERO which includes the transitional housing program and the Rapid Rehousing program at HP. HousingPlus is a housing agency and our commitment is to provide housing to women; specifically women who are unhoused, justice impacted and may have mental health and substance abuse challenges.

With over 25 years working in social services with the last 15+ being in the shelter system, supportive, permanent and transitional housing I believe I have demonstrated commitment to fighting homelessness. It is my goal to affect change and being a part of the steering committee helps me to stay connected to the current issues, provide feedback, support and to ensure that HousingPlus continues to be at the forefront of providing quality housing through partnerships with the CoC. As an elected member I plan to stay active and participate on the domestic violence committee. As someone who has researched DV and authored a book and lecture on the topic I hope to be a team player who can brainstorm with my fellow committee members to address this social phenomenon. I am before you today asking for your vote. My commitment to you is to be present, focused, accountable and dedicated to the mission of the steering committee.

Thank you

## (18) Shearon Joseph

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Seat – Non-profit

I want to thank the committee for this opportunity. My name is Shearon Joseph and

I represent FACES NY, Inc. an organization that has been in the community for more than 35 years serving people of color. We are located in central Haarlem at 123 w. 115<sup>th</sup> st.

We understand the traumatic impact that homelessness has on the individual and so we fight tirelessly to try to improve some of the effects that homelessness has on individuals and families by providing a variety of services such as Supportive Housing, Case Management, Substance use & mental health counseling, Health and Nutritional services, pantry, outreach, HIV testing, and so on.

We believe in empowering individuals to reach their highest potential by meeting them at their point of vulnerability and moving them upward and forward to greater self-reliance and autonomy.

As an organization, some of our experience comes from working with NGO's (non profit organizations) internationally more specifically in the Caribbean (Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago & Jamaica) where we were able to provide training to housing providers in supportive housing for people with AIDS and where we conducted HIV presentations to students and in community villages. These were valuable experience as it helped to provide us with a cultural perspective in serving people outside of the United states.

I have been with FACES for more than 28 years and have been at the forefront of this fight and have always sought to make a difference in the lives of those I encounter in my role as the Director of housing.

I applied to be on this Committee because I think I come with a long history of providing supportive housing in NYC and can provide a reference point in addressing issues that come up for discussion. FACES can also serve as a venue for committee meetings and events. My philosophy in this fight to end homelessness is rooted in the belief that

“Housing is a fundamental right and all persons should have a fair opportunity for their sanctuary”

Once again, I am happy to represent my agency FACES NY, Inc. I look forward to working with all the nominees and making a difference as we work together to address the needs of those we serve.

Thank you

## (19) Maddox Guerilla

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Seat – Non-profit

My name is MADDUX GUERILLA and I am representing the Ali Forney Center as the CoC funded organization seat The Ali Forney Center serves over 2200 LGBTQ young people each year. LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness make up almost half of the overall youth homelessness population. It is important that as a city we prioritize and elevate the needs of the LGBTQ community to combat the disparities that are far too common. Often times homeless LGBTQ young people are siloed, and this is an opportunity to collaborate with the CoC to make sure these experiences are centered. Being the representative of the Ali Forney Center I also bring a unique perspective as a former youth with lived experience and former COC youth voting member, during my time at the CoC I worked on addressing equity, anti-racism and youth inclusion by changing the by-laws and creating a permanent persons with lived experience seat for the NYC youth action board. I would like to continue that legacy collaborating with the CoC to make sure the needs and experiences of LGBTQ youth are uplifted and reflected and provide internal training, support and advocacy to other members of the CoC to better serve and understand the needs of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

Thank You.

## (20) Cameron Craig

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Seat – PWLEx (G)

My name is Cameron Craig, I currently the co-chair of the people with live experience committee, I am asking for your vote to be reelected to the steering committee. It's has been a pleasure working with you this year a special with the changing made with our HMIS system and the changing made within evaluation of program subject to PQI. In the coming year we will be looking at how well the unsheltered homeless program which we just got founded for is

working. For the first time the Pwlex committee was asked to write a letter to HUD endorsing pic renewal of this year NOFO. I hope you will allow me to continue working with you in reducing our homeless community.

## (21) Elizabeth Mackey

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Seat – PWLEx (G)

First my Name is Elizabeth Mackey and I currently now reside in Brooklyn NY.

I once was homeless yes. Homeless for a course of a year. I resided in three of New York City shelter systems that was run by DHS which Department Homeless Services. I came into the shelter system in March 2022 and got out in March 2023. I made it alive. Some set backs but alive. It was a JOURNEY but with God ,Prayers and a vision yes I made it out.

I received 2 different vouchers ( City Feps and the EHV known as Section 8). However, due to lazy of the housing specialist she was determined to have me use the City Feps voucher because she stated it was much easy and faster but to me it still requires the same work. Nevertheless ,I couldn't wait any longer I just wanted out. I had experienced enough because I felt as if I was in jail and everyday was a fight from hell from shelter to shelter from the residents to the staff. However, at the 2nd shelter they had no housing specialist and the case managers had no clue on what they were doing so 9 months of nothing went by of lack of service.

The 3rd Shelter is where my journey was near completion. It was much better some struggles but not as much . I felt as if I was in my promise land.

But I made it . Thru my temporary stay I realized that the system was broken and it either need to be improved or to be dismantle and to start from bottom, because the system they have now is not working for us and that includes DHS ,DSS, and HRA all of these systems are systems of suppression for black and brown communities with hardly no growth but a let down .

We need systems and people that will work together to help us and not to put us down or look down at us because of what we are going through. We are all human beings and we are all need to be treated like so.

Housing is a human right . Everyone deserves a second or third chance. It doesn't matter how you got there what matters is getting out into your own affordable safe decent apartment.

Without housing it effects your whole well being from your physical to your mental. You tend to loose your belongs and then you have to start over again but why is that . It's because you only allow to carry two bags in the shelter. But what happens when you have more then two bags ? what happens when you unable to afford storage ? but what if the staff just throw your

belongs out in the trash just BECAUSE? What is this. Where is the compassion . Have we lost that?

I know we can sit here to say we have a crisis and it can't be fix but I say Yes it can be fix. But the Question is Do You want to Fix it and if so Are you Ready to FIX IT.?

The federal government provides these local government agencies to do so much but when we look they do so little but they continue to take and take and deceive the people for their own gain. But The Bible says what's done in the dark always comes to light. We no longer can't live in darkness and sit back to see our brother and sister to Continue to suffer. It's not right. The question is what would you do if that was you in that position of being homeless?

For what I experienced these shelters is not doing right with the money. I can only speak about the ones I encountered. They have no resources , the food they provided are high in salt ,molded on the food , worm Infested and the list goes on. They provided nothing but they continue to request money to say they provide so much for the people who reside there but literally nothing is provided but a bed for a couple of hours to sleep in and every two weeks a ILP. You tend to beg for things that are essential like to list paper and when you complain staff and the Directors retaliate and have you transfer because they feel you are a trouble maker.

If I'm elected I will ensure that services are in place in all shelters for all residents, I will ensure that resources are there , I will ensure that the people have access to WiFi so they can begin searching for apartments, I will ensure that their needs are being meet because that's is why the grants are suppose to be use for correct within the shelters and hotels . We must also have these shelters take accountability of what they are not doing. They must get the right staff and staff who are train must do their jobs to assist these residents into housing especially those who have vouchers for length of time .We as CoC must also get other local agencies involve with these shelters so they can also assist because they to have resources that the shelters may not be made aware of.

We must do better and if I'm elected I will assist will creating ideas to ensure that a better model approach system can be form because again Housing is a human Right and Every one deserve better.

If you are not about a solution then you are part of the problem. I will continue to use my voice to be about solutions with organizations I'm on like Vocal NY which I'm a member and a leader for the housing homeless union ,The National Coalition for the Homeless a member and on the committee for new membership committee, Mt. Moriah Crisis Ministries, Morris Brown Community Outreach Ministries, DOH Regional Committee for Faith based. I have great leadership skills, I'm always willing to learn, I'm non-judgmental, I expect the challenge, I'm flexible, I show empathy, I give of my self,I have super faith and wisdom, humble, confident, committed to serve the communities and a problem solver.



Homelessness does not discriminate to anyone. It does not matter your education background, family status, financial status, employment status, race all of these does not matter because when you come into this system you get a cares number which follows you . What matters is what are you going to do with the tools you have to make the situation you facing better.

Thank you . Have a Bless Day

## (22) Ulysses Peter Malvan

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Seat – PWLEx (A)

This is Ulysses Peter Malvan, He His Him. You should vote for me as a PWLEx representative because although I have 32 years of experience being street homeless, I have 36 years of involvement working with St. Francis Xavier Welcome tabke IAHH, UHO, Dinkin’ Advisory on Homelessness, RFMH and Pathways to Housing creation of Housing First Model, Duke University Housing Preference Study, NYSPI CTI Demonstration, Outreach under DOHMH, DHS. MOC.

Currently being a homeless advocate with PWLEx, UJC/SNP, Outreach at Midnight Runs, Soup Kitchens, Homeless encampments, and with people in shelters, and supportive housing. Having working in these spaces for 17 years and having a role in member led groups involved in legal and political activism with DSS/HRA/DHS, NYS and USICH.

You should vote for me to remind us of the obligation to improve out continuum on function and transparency making it a viable investment toward ending homelessness by including homeless persons in proce3s3ses as was done during pandemic with the homeless Cant Stay Home Housing pilot. Using the SNOFO letter of support as an initial guide.

## (24) Philip Malebranche

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Seat – PWLEx (G)

As a member of the steering committee, I would like to continue representing those who experience homelessness, as I have for several years. Since 2011, I have been a member of the Consumer Advisory Board at Care For the Homeless, a partner of the CCoC. In 2018, I was appointed to the Board of Directors of CFH and am now serving as Chair of the Policy and Advocacy Committee. In 2012, I was elected to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council’s National Consumer Advisory Board (called NCAB), where I served for five years. I have also participated in the Consumer Advisory Board of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. With an undergraduate degree in Sociology, I am writing to expound ideas to end homelessness, studying my own experience. My observations and qualitative research have led to a theory. As a result of a wide and interdisciplinary perspective, I expect to contribute to the knowledge of the experience of homelessness and on ending it. Thank you for considering my candidacy.

# (27) Shandra Rogers

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Seat – PWLEx (Y)

Good afternoon to the voting committee, the larger committee, and the public joining today. My name is Shandra Rogers. I am a Black 21-year-old queer woman in my senior year at Howard University, majoring in pre-law and political science, with a minor in Media journalism. I am so honored to be here with you all today, as I have been involved with the YAB for about three years now. In the past three years, I have received the most fulfillment from the work the YAB has been able to do when we come together. There's something magical about youth-led revolutionary thought. My fellow YAB members never fail to amaze, inspire, and bring joy. Through my time in the YAB, I have been able to work on New York City's most recent Coordinated Community Plan. Starting from the stages of Data collection, all the way to the moments of editing the final rough draft, I was fully immersed in the idea of possibility. See, possibility is rooted in every avenue of our lives. With every breath we give birth to endless possibilities of existence. Yet- simply existing is not enough. In a world where epistemic systems have broken down the global south for the sole purpose of satisfying capitalism through a social contract rooted in race, possibility is limited. It is no secret- im sure- to all of us here today those systems, especially those of housing, have been used to uphold this status quo. Opportunity is the missing aspect of this puzzle.

For young women like me, opportunity is everything. When people think of girls like me many versions of myself are brought to the surface. I was born to a 15 year old single mother- my biological father incarcerated. Age 4 was the age where I first experienced the sexual trauma that results from society not protecting their girls. I experienced it again at age 7 and it seems as if it's never ended since then. At age 5, I was ripped from my mother's arms when ACS wrongfully decided she was unfit to be a parent. As a result, I spent most of my first-grade year with anxiety, PTSD, and an arguably adorable-but to me annoying- stuttering problem. At age 7 I was diagnosed with dyslexia and dyscalculia. I spent ages 8 through 10 filled with anger. Acting whichever way allowed me to be heard and seen. However, when I say young women like me, I don't mean those who have been disadvantaged by a series of systemic processes. I mean those who will shine regardless. See, opportunity has the ability to differentiate those who could have, who should have, and those who will be.

In my life, opportunity has looked like the cultivation of safe spaces for youth; Because if this, I've been privileged to have many opportunities to be something bigger than my struggle. Prior to my position at the YAB, I have been able to do plenty of community work starting from my sophomore year of high school, where I organized the March for our Lives walkout for my high school district. I have promoted civic engagement for young girls through the assisted implementation of New Girl City, a program where girls get to imagine themselves as politicians and role play the functions of government through their specific roles. With this, I have been able to have important conversations with people like Michelle Obama, whom I had the

pleasure of meeting and lunching with, Stacy Abrams, Cleo Wade and Elaine Welteroth. I have formed close bonds with council women in New York City and other influential activists. I've formed a new family operating as a youth ambassador for Colin Kaepernick's Know Your Rights Campaign, in which I travel the country with Colin to educate marginalized youth about their rights. In addition, I can communicate ideas well not just through writing and speeches, but by using art as activism; I did a photography project centered around water sustainability that I also had the privilege of sharing at the United Nations. I've started a T-shirt line that uses art to speak about political and social issues. I've been able to use radio journalism to speak about important issues with guests such as Nick Cannon, and so much more through my internship at Hot 97. Throughout my time doing this work I have been featured on the news, in newspaper publications such as The New York Times, and in many magazines as well as audio publications such as National Public Radio.

Today, I sit as a member of the YAB, and as a youth consultant for Direct Cash Transfers as Prevention for Point Source Youth because of this opportunity. This is why I have dedicated my career to solving the issue of youth homelessness: because Opportunity Starts with Home. As I think of how I've changed from a girl adversely impacted by societal systems to a woman ready to dismantle systems through legislation and advocacy. I think of Howard's motto of "Truth and Service". I think of the value of knowing the truth of my story and how those systems are bigger than me. I think of the value of hearing the truth from those impacted by these systems and centering them when developing solutions. I think of how I, right now, stand at a unique position of opportunity as I speak with you all today. As one who wants to bring opportunity to other young people through truth and service.

This is what I plan to do if given the opportunity to hold the YAB Chair seat at the coalition. Homelessness is not just an issue of human rights, but an issue of opportunity. I hope, in the near future, I will be given the opportunity to work with you all as we bring opportunity through housing to young people all across New York.

Thank you.