

Seattle Social Housing Developer Board Member Biographies

Brian Ramirez

Brian was appointed to the board by El Centro de la Raza. Brian is a Housing Development Associate at El Centro de la Raza (ECDLR) and offers 5 years of professional experience in housing research, tenants' rights, city planning, and affordable housing development. Currently, Brian is responsible for directly assisting the Executive Director and Associate Director with ECDLR's affordable housing developments, childcare center developments, and residential and commercial asset management. Brian's academic background includes a B.A in Urban Studies from the University of California, Berkeley and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Julie Howe

Julie was appointed to the board by the Seattle City Council. Julie brings over twenty-five years of experience in housing development and asset management. She has spent her career managing the acquisition/rehab and development of multifamily and single-family projects, both conventional, affordable/LIHTC and demonstration, senior and family, ownership, and rental.

She is drawn to the complex and innovative, especially projects that are blazing new trails in how we live more affordably and build community such as cooperatives, co-living and co-housing. She has served as director, development manager and investment manager for several organizations and as Principal at Urban Evolution and is a licensed real estate broker. Julie also served on Mayor Jenny Durkin's Affordable Middle-Income Housing Advisory Council.

Julie has an undergraduate degree in environmental design and architecture from the University of Colorado – Boulder and a Master of Urban Planning with a Certificate in Commercial Real Estate from the University of Washington. Julie is currently working on an Interdisciplinary PhD at the UW, researching how housing intersects with mental health.

Alexander Lew

Alexander was appointed to the board by the Seattle City Council. Alex is an urban planner and multi-modal transportation planner currently working at Sound Transit as a Senior Transportation Planner. He has previously held positions at King County and with Nelson/Nygaard, in addition to a term as a board member on the City of Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board. He has experience in public transit systems, multi-modal transportation, and airport planning. Alex also provided value aid and insight to the King County Board of Health during the repeal of King County's helmet law.

He is actively involved with Who's Streets Our Streets, a cohort building a platform for BIPOC individuals to participate in the drafting, review, and implementation of safety on our streets, in our neighborhoods, and he is on the board of Seattle Neighborhood Greenways.

Alex has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Urban History and Sustainable Development from Columbia University and a Master's in Urban Planning with Distinction from Harvard University.

His multi-disciplinary experience in planning, demonstrated commitment to rooting work in social and racial equity, and his understanding of the complex intersection between public infrastructure and social wellbeing make him an ideal candidate for this position.

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Michael Eliason

Michael was appointed to the board by the Green New Deal Oversight Board. Michael Eliason is the founder of Larch Lab - part architecture and urbanism studio, part 'think and do' tank - focusing on research and policy; decarbonized low-energy buildings; and climate adaptive urbanism. Michael is also a writer and an award-winning architect specializing in mass timber, social housing, baugruppen (urban cohousing), and ecodistricts. His career has been dedicated to advancing innovation and broadening the discourse on sustainable development, passivhaus, non-market housing, and decarbonized construction. Michael is a graduate of Virginia Tech and became a Passivhaus consultant in 2010. His professional experience includes work in both the Pacific Northwest, and Germany.

Tori Nakamatsu-Figaroa

Tori was appointed to the board by the Martin Luther King Jr. Council Labor Council. Tori Nakamatsu-Figaroa, pronouns she/her, is a UFCW 3000 shop steward. For the past six years she has worked at Metropolitan Market and led UFCW 3000's member advocacy on I-135 as part of the Movement Builder program. Tori is originally from Hawaii and experienced first-hand the challenges local people face in no longer being able to afford to live in their own communities. She is inspired by the work of House Our Neighbors and labor working together to address the root causes of our current housing crisis, advocating for policy that both creates affordable housing and enables people access to the necessary resources to stay in their homes. She and other UFCW 3000 members played a decisive role in the outcome of this election, having collected signatures in grocery stores across Seattle and canvassing voters door to door.

Chuck Depew

Chuck was appointed by Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrel. Chuck Depew is a Senior Director for the National Development Council, a national non-profit that provides economic and community development assistance to local governments. For more than 30 years NDC has worked with local jurisdictions on multiple housing and economic development efforts. Chuck provides technical assistance in project finance, development negotiation and housing finance to communities throughout the Northwest, including Utah and Wyoming and Northern California. In addition, he teaches commercial and housing real estate finance nationwide in NDC's leading training program. Prior to his tenure at NDC, Chuck was Deputy Director of the Office of Economic Development for the City of Seattle. He has over 30 years of experience in public finance, housing, economic and community development.

Mr. Depew has a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Planning from the University of California, at Santa Cruz; and a Master's degree in Urban Planning from the University of Washington.

Ebo Barton

Ebo was appointed to the board by the Seattle Renters Commission. Ebo [he/him or they/them] is a cultural worker, artist, educator and the Director of Housing Services at Lavender Rights Project. Barton was stationed in the Pacific Northwest during their time in the United States Navy by way of Los Angeles, California and has lived in Seattle for 17 years. Ebo has demonstrated their commitment to equitable change in which BIPOC thrive with power and purpose with their work in the Seattle Arts Community, befriending, mentoring and collaborating with youth, working for justice in health equity, trans rights,

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managing programs, organizing events and producing shows in the Pacific Northwest for the past 13 years. A leader in arts and activism, Ebo is committed to creating opportunities for others to organize, heal and rejoice.

Kaileah Baldwin

Kaileah was appointed to the board by the Seattle Renters Commission. Kaileah is a queer Black cis-woman born-and-raised in Seattle and living in the South Park neighborhood (98108). Her professional background is in non-profit people-centered HR, which she currently does at Seattle-based advocacy organization, Puget Sound Sage & Sage Leaders. HR approach to HR and life in general people- and care-centered, in opposition to white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy, and celebratory of QTBIPOC ways of working and being.

Kaileah's multiracial background (mixed white & Black) has given her personal insight into how Seattle's history of racialized land use and housing policy impacts people today. While both her white and Black grandparents having moved to Seattle within 15 years in the mid-century, she is the only Black person across three generations who continue live in the city due to the region's subtle-yet-persistent antiBlack racism and the sheer unaffordability of Seattle housing. Kaileah is looking forward to helping the new Seattle Social Housing Developer add permanently and actually affordable people-centered housing to reinvigorate the city's affordable housing landscape and meaningfully tackle our homelessness and displacement crises.

Devyn Forschmiedt

Devyn was appointed to the board by the Seattle Renters Commission. Devyn grew up in Shoreline and moved to Seattle in 2016. Since 2015 Devyn has been working full time in early childhood education, which has contributed to their passion for building a better world for the next generation. In 2020 Devyn started teaching at a Head Start program, through which they have seen even more of the impacts that lack of access to safe and supportive housing and other resources have on families, especially those who are more marginalized. Devyn strongly believes that housing is a fundamental human right. They believe that a healthy society has systems in place that allow every person to thrive. In addition to working to connect families to resources, Devyn has done occasional small-scale volunteer work distributing material aid to unhoused communities. Devyn canvassed for Initiative 135 and has also been volunteering as a community organizer with the ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) Coalition for several years, which has given them significant experience with building broad coalitions, public speaking, and managing logistics. Devyn has spent most of their adult life living in inadequate or unsafe housing of various types and absolutely knows firsthand how hard it is for even a single person working full time to reach a place of stability. To Devyn, social housing represents an opportunity for loved ones, the communities they serve, and so many others to reach that stability. Devyn believes it is one small first step towards an equitable world.

Thomas Barnard

Thomas was appointed to the board by the Seattle Renters Commission. Thomas was born in 1954 in Syracuse, NY, and lived there until 1980, moved to San Francisco and then Oakland during the early 1980's. then moved to Dallas, TX in 1985, and then to Seattle in 1987. Thomas relocated to Seatac in

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2018, as they could not find affordable rent in Seattle. Thomas spent three years in factory work, and many years in the restaurant business as a cook/chef, transitioning out in the late 1980's after moving to Seattle. In the 90's Thomas received a BA in Political Economy and Community Development from Evergreen State College and worked for the WA State Legislature as a Session Aide and as an organizer, researcher and writer in two nonprofits. In the 2000's Thomas received a Master in Public Administration from the Evans School of Public Policy with a concentration in urban issues, including housing, workforce and economic development and transportation. Worked as Policy Analyst for the Port of Seattle Commission from 2008-2016. Thomas ended working life driving for 3 years for Uber/Lyft. Retired in 2019-2020.

Dawn Dailey

Dawn was appointed to the board by the Seattle Renters Commission. Dawn grew up in the military and is an artist and dedicated social and racial justice activist. Dawn's entire life has been in dedicated service to the community and government entities Dawn has lived in. As a former Army wife, Dawn continued service to the community as a Head Start social worker, a special needs educator, and within the Department of Defense in education, art, and culture. Utilizing transformative justice and trauma-informed care have been instrumental in Dawn's formal and informal pedagogical approaches in civil service to our community as well. Dawn has been the 43rd Democrats Fundraiser Chair since 2020, and the 43rd Meetings and Events Chair since 2023. Dawn's proudest achievements in the community were curating two Initiative 135 educational musical programs, one a fundraiser, and the other a GOTV educational campaign. It was an honor to activate and work with so many incredible artists, media, and creative communities to raise revenue and awareness of the importance of social housing. Dawn will continue leading with collective trauma-informed care, arts education, policy, and intentional purpose to advance social housing, housing justice, and interrelated racial justice. Dawn will use education in outreach to neighborhoods to provide a better understanding that each and every district needs social housing for human compassion, environmental climate change, industrial viability, and a thriving urban servicescape.

Katie LeBret

Katie was appointed to the board by the Seattle Renters Commission. Katie is Native American and comes from a small-town reservation in Belcourt and has lived in Washington state for 7 years. Katie is currently living unhoused as a vehicle resident in Seattle, having lived previously in supportive housing, youth-oriented shelters, and having received rapid rehousing assistance. Katie has experience navigating Seattle's complex system of resources geared toward serving people living unhoused and with that experience carries the knowledge of the challenges associated with accessing services, and with staying housed in our current ecosystem. Katie is a proud trans woman who has faced a lot of no's and hurdles growing up. Katie wants to help others help themselves and to be a role model for others.

Kayellen Zimmerman

Kayellen was appointed to the board by the Seattle Renters Commission. Kayellen was born in Michigan, was a treeplanter throughout their 20s and experienced intermittent homelessness into their 30s. Kayellen worked as a baker and cook for the next 30 years, as a side hustle Kayellen worked as a caregiver, and now work as a full time caregiver. Throughout this time, Kayellen has done mutual aid,

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food security and housing work. Kayellen believes that to make it through the times ahead, we must bring all people to the table. Kayellen has worked for many years with LIHI, Bellwether, Community Roots, HUD, and SHA to get folks into housing. Kayellen looks forward to social housing adding more housing to the current landscape.