

2025-2026 FC2 EMERGING LEADERS



ISAAC AGBESHIE-NOYE

Program Director for Widening Pathways to Work, Society for Human Resource Development (SHRM) Foundation

Isaac Agbeshie-Noye is the Program Director for Widening Pathways to Work at the Society for Human Resource Development (SHRM) Foundation. He is most excited about fostering healthy organizational cultures that expand opportunity and create space for all people to thrive. Professionally, Isaac has been working in program design, change management, and workforce development for over 15 years in a variety of roles across non-profits and colleges and universities in the Washington, DC area.

His experience includes partnership development, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and strategy, project management, college student transition, talent development, and crisis management. Since 2012, he has also served as an instructor for undergraduate and doctoral student seminars, where he explores his passions for easing student transitions to and through their experiences in higher education.

Isaac earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Virginia, as well as a master's and doctoral degree in higher education administration from George Washington University. His research investigated organizational culture and brand equity at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).



FAWZIA AHMEDALI

Principal, Perkins Eastman

Fawzia Ahmedali is a Principal at Perkins Eastman. She has lived and worked across India, Hong Kong, Singapore and North America over the span of her twenty-plus-year career. That diverse experience has given her an affinity toward architecture that is rooted in modernism yet unique to its place: "Rational" buildings, she says, that respond to their cultural and climatic context in addition to their site conditions, and local materials and techniques where applicable. At Perkins Eastman, she has been fortunate work on projects that prioritize placemaking and the human experience—very much in tune with her own personal philosophy.

Fawzia's body of work spans the globe and encompasses diverse project types including commercial, residential, mixed-use, educational and transit systems. As a project architect and team leader in the Washington, DC, studio, she has worked on several transformative mixed-use projects in the District.

Fawzia's professional priorities are informed by her experience as an immigrant and minority professional, steering her to focus on building more equitable and inclusive teams and firm culture. To that end, she helps lead the DC studio's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) efforts, its professional mentoring program, and Women's Leadership Initiative. She also serves on the firmwide DE&I steering committee to promote diversity more broadly across its 22 studios.



JAMES BARLIA

Executive Director, STATION DC

James Barlia is the Executive Director of STATION DC, a nonprofit members' club where technologists, investors, and policymakers convene to tackle the world's most pressing challenges. Before founding STATION DC, James was a Vice President at Revolution in D.C., partnering with entrepreneurs across highly regulated industries—healthcare, housing, defense, transportation, and education—through initiatives like the Rise of the Rest Seed Fund. He began his career at Greenspring Associates, a venture-capital platform in Maryland. Outside of STATION DC, James invests via JKB Ventures, volunteers with Experience Camps, and helps run a grief-support walking club he launched with his siblings. A D.C. native, he's obsessed with unlocking the District's full potential.



ZACHARY BREWER

Human Resources Director, Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind

Zachary Brewer is the Human Resources Director for Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind. He is an innovative and motivating HR Professional who transforms business foresight into HR initiatives that improve performance, profitability, growth, and employee engagement. An empowering leader who supports companies and top executives with a distinctive perspective and gratitude that human capital is every organization's greatest advantage.



GORDON FLETCHER

Professor, American University

Professor Gordon Fletcher was born in Kingston, Jamaica and grew up in the Bronx, NY and Yonkers, NY. He moved to the District of Columbia over 20 years ago to attend American University, where he completed his undergraduate studies with a bachelor's degree in political science and an Advanced Degree in Leadership Studies. Next, he attended the historic Florida A & M University College of Law in 2010 where he served as the Graduate Student Senator while being a dedicated member of the Mock Trials' Team and serving as the Caribbean Law Students Association President. Thereafter, he graduated from American University again in December 2017 with a master's in public administration & Policy while serving as the 2016/2017 Graduate Student Body President for over 3,600 students.

Professor Fletcher is an attorney that worked for the National Oceanic & Atmospheric at the Department of Commerce. In addition, he is an Adjunct Professor at American University's School of Public Affairs and Washington College of Law teaching Criminal Justice & Public Policy, Legal Analysis of Local & State Governments, Negotiations and Communications, and Cities & Crime. He also teaches repeat Bar Exam Takers how to successfully pass the Bar Exam through Merlin's Test Prep. Professor Fletcher served as the Executive Director of DC Poverty Commission and now handles legislative matters for the DC Department of Employment Services. In his community, Professor Fletcher is the former Chair of ANC 5A, a four term Commissioner that represented the North Michigan Park/Fort Totten area in Ward 5, and the past Chairman of the Ward 5 Democratic Party.



ALEX HALAS

Acquisitions Associate, Post Brothers

Alex Halas is an experienced professional in the real estate sector, currently serving as an Acquisitions Associate at Post Brothers since April 2023. Prior to this role, Alex held positions at Rubenstein Partners, including Associate and Senior Analyst, from April 2021 to April 2023. Alex began a career in acquisitions and capital markets as an Analyst at LeFrak from August 2019 to April 2021 and gained initial experience as a Summer Research Intern at UPA | University Place Associates LLC in 2018. Earlier professional experience includes a position as a Lifeguard at Avalon Beach Patrol from June 2015 to August 2017. Alex earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability and Environmental Management from the University of Pennsylvania in 2019.

LAJOY JOHNSON-LAW

Representative, District of Columbia State Board of Education Ward 8



LaJoy Johnson-Law is a Ward 8 resident with a beautiful special need's daughter named Abria who attends Rocketship Legacy Academy Public Charter School. LaJoy is heavily involved in the education landscape in D.C., previously serving as a Board Member at AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School and currently sits on the Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) board and Thrive by Coordinating Council as a parent member. In addition, she also currently serves as President of the University of Phoenix DMV Alumni Chapter Association. She is as a parent leader at Rocketship Public Charter School, where Abria is enrolled in the 3rd Grade. She is constantly inspired by her daughter, who was born very prematurely at 23 weeks and 1 pound 6 ounces. Abria is a miracle baby.

Motivated by her advocacy for Abria and other children like her, she has also volunteered as a classroom paraprofessional at St. Coletta Special Education Public Charter School. LaJoy currently works at Advocates for Justice and Education (AJE) to continue her advocacy efforts for families who have children with disabilities. LaJoy holds an Associate's Degree in Elementary Education, a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Phoenix.

MITCH LAROSA

Director, Mobility Innovation District



LaRosa is the Director of the Mobility Innovation District (MID). LaRosa, a seasoned transportation planner and climate advocate, brings a wealth of experience in sustainable and equitable mobility solutions.

Prior to joining the Mobility Innovation District, LaRosa served as Chief Development Officer for Shared Mobility Inc., a national nonprofit focused on developing and operating shared-use transportation programs with a community-first approach in disadvantaged communities. LaRosa led several critical projects in this role, including Project MOVER, which established a multi-community testbed for emerging mobility programs and technologies in Westchester County, NY. LaRosa also served on the leadership team for Clean Mobility Buffalo, an initiative focused on advancing quality of life and access to transportation for BIPOC communities on Buffalo's East Side.

LaRosa brings an operations background that includes work on bikeshare, e-bike library, carshare, and volunteer transportation programs. As Program Director, he helped to grow the Reddy Bikeshare program's system footprint and usage by 250%. LaRosa also led the creation of new e-bike library programs with grassroots nonprofits utilizing former bike share fleets, providing increased personal mobility for underserved community members while promoting sustainable business practices.

In addition to his hands-on management skills, LaRosa is a respected voice in transportation policy. His work with the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center resulted in a report advocating for new shared-use program models to better serve older adults and people with disabilities. LaRosa has also helped guide the creation of micromobility policy with community leaders across New York State.

CHRIS MARSHALL

Vice President of Development, The NRP Group



Chris Marshall joined The NRP Group in 2020 to lead the company's affordable housing development activities in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. He oversees all aspects of the affordable housing development process with a focus on site acquisitions, concept/schematic design, entitlements, and funding applications.

Prior to joining NRP, Marshall served as a Project Manager with Wesley Housing Development Corporation, a leading nonprofit affordable housing developer in the DC region. During this time, he was involved in a full range of development activities, from sourcing new projects to leading rezoning processes. He was also responsible for initiating funding applications and collaborating with apartment residents on in-place renovations and tenant opportunity to purchase scenarios.

Two of Marshall's previous roles have given him a unique perspective and skillset within The NRP Group. During his tenure at the U.S. Green Building Council, he was instrumental in developing criteria for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Then, at the DC Department of Housing and Community Development, he implemented the District's Inclusionary Zoning and Affordable Dwelling Unit housing programs. He holds a Master's degree in urban and regional planning from Virginia Tech and a Bachelor's degree in social policy from Michigan State University.

CANDACE NELSON

Chief of Staff, The Office of Janeese Lewis George

Candace Tiana Nelson serves as the Chief of Staff for Councilmember Janeese Lewis George. She manages the day-to-day operations of the office, the staff, and Stakeholder Relations. Ms. Nelson has been a public servant for many years, serving in leadership roles pertaining to community outreach, legislation, operations, policy, and performance management responsibilities at the Department of Small and Local Business Development, the Executive Office of the Mayor, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Employment Services, and the Department of Health Care Finance. Her performance and project management expertise led to details at both the Workforce Investment Council and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Greater Economic Opportunity. Additionally, she was appointed and served as the Transition Director and Chief of Staff for the District of Columbia's 2022 Attorney General Transition, shepherding out the Racine Administration while ushering in the Schwalb Administration and submitting a 233-page Transition Memo with an 88-page appendix.

She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Virginia Commonwealth University and is a graduate of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School's Peace and Conflict Resolution – Policy of Decision-Making Fellowship at George Mason University.

CORY PETERSON

Associate Vice President for Community Engagement and Local Government Affairs, Georgetown University

As the Associate Vice President of Community Engagement and Local Government Affairs at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Cory spearheads Georgetown's engagement with its neighbors, the broader DC community, and the DC government, leads Campus Planning and assists with the development of Georgetown University's Capitol Campus in downtown D.C. Prior to this position, Cory worked at American University in Community and Government Relations. Prior to his role at American University, Cory served as the inaugural Director in the Office of Neighborhood Life at Georgetown supporting students and community members in the adjacent neighborhoods and assisted in implementing the University's campus plan.

WHITNEY ROYAL

Membership Initiatives Specialist, Girl Scouts Nation's Capital

Whitney J. Royal is a dynamic leader, educator, and advocate whose nearly 15 years of service in Washington, D.C., reflect her unwavering commitment to community empowerment and civic innovation. A proud native of the District, Whitney has devoted her career to creating meaningful change across the city's resilient and culturally vibrant neighborhoods.

A nationally recognized voice in the humanities and education, Whitney was honored with the Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in the Humanities, celebrating her deep impact on the cultural and intellectual fabric of the District.

Currently serving the Girl Scouts Nation's Capital Development Team, Whitney leads community engagement strategies to strengthen membership and build sustainable partnerships—particularly in Wards 7 and 8. Her work exemplifies grassroots leadership, fostering trust, empowerment, and opportunities where it's needed most.

GEOFFREY SPARKS

Associate, Arup

Geoffrey Sparks works as an Associate Principal at Arup, which is an Architecture, Engineering & Design company with an estimated 18.5 K employees; and founded in 1946. Geoffrey graduated from Johns Hopkins University - Peabody Conservatory and is currently based in Washington, D.C.



CHERRELLE SWAIN

Creative Strategist and Filmmaker at Terra Rossa

Cherrelle Swain is a filmmaker and creative strategist who works at the intersection of social impact, racial justice, and activism. As a consultant, Cherrelle works with brands and organizations to activate systemic change. Her background is in education, social entrepreneurship, racial equity, and philanthropy. She has deep experience in building public-private partnerships and is expert in connecting people and ideas to identify and solve problems.

Cherrelle worked as an associate producer for *Black Boys Film*, currently streaming on NBC Peacock, and is now the producer/co-director of *Black Girls Film* where she creates visual stories and healing spaces to rapidly spread self-love, expression, and self-determination for Black girls.



ZACHARY WILLIAMS

Partner, Venable

Zachary Williams focuses his practice on land use and zoning law. He represents clients in a broad range of land use, zoning, and real estate development matters throughout the D.C. metropolitan region.

Zachary's broad knowledge of land use and zoning issues includes work on mixed use, multifamily and office projects, industrial projects, child care centers and schools, religious institutions, and national and local retail brands. He regularly handles all types of land use applications including special exceptions, comprehensive plan amendments, PUD applications, conditional use permits, special use permits, site plans, variances, subdivisions, and rezonings. He also regularly assists clients with zoning violation issues and zoning due diligence reviews prior to the acquisition and development of property.

In addition to land use and zoning development work, Zachary also has expertise with land use and zoning appeals and related litigation. He has handled land use and real property-related litigation and appeals that have reached the Virginia Supreme Court, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, the Maryland Court of Appeals, and the Maryland Court of Special Appeals. His experience includes matters involving boards of zoning appeals (BZAs); real estate tax assessment appeals, real property disputes; local government and construction-related cases; easement disputes; rights of first refusal; adverse possession; restrictive covenants; commercial lease disputes; and condominium and property owners' association disputes.



ROBINSON WOODWARD-BURNS

Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Political Science, Howard University

Robinson Woodward-Burns is an associate professor and director of graduate studies in the Department of Political Science at Howard University. He has written widely on American constitutionalism, voting rights, elections, and D.C. politics in academic journals and *The Atlantic* and *The Washington Post*. In 2021, his first book, on state constitutions, was published. He is currently writing a second book on racial disenfranchisement. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Pennsylvania and sits on the board of D.C. Vote.