

COMMERCIAL AFFORDABILITY SUMMIT



INNOVATIVE FINANCING MODELS FOR COMMERCIAL AFFORDABILITY AND A THRIVING SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

Wednesday, October 11th
9:30 am - 4:30 pm
Bethaday TAF Community Learning Space

The lack of affordable commercial spaces across the Puget Sound region, inequitable public policy, and ongoing systemic barriers to economic opportunity and access to capital contribute to displacement, discrimination, and other structural obstacles for small business owners - particularly for Black, Indigenous, immigrant and refugee small business owners, and entrepreneurs from communities historically disinvested in. The intent of the COO Commercial Affordability pilot was to support and build on existing projects and strategies aimed at supporting small businesses by promoting commercial affordability, identifying new tools to increase access to capital, and finding ways to address other barriers, such as technical assistance for capital improvements and other business/real estate finance needs.

With today's convening, COO will share what we learned from the pilot project, which concluded in 2022, and provide a platform for learning about additional strategies, models and programs that are currently being designed and implemented in support of an equitable and thriving small businesses environment and greater economic justice. Participants will hear about programs and models providing increased access to capital, technical assistance (TA) and capacity building support, fixed and affordable rents, community ownership, and additional tools and resources necessary for financial stability and growth. COO hopes that today's summit helps to strengthen the knowledge, connections and ongoing conversations that will advance and scale what's working to create greater affordability and economic justice, and the infrastructures and partnerships necessary to strengthen a small businesses and entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports thriving and self-determined communities across our region.

AGENDA

9:30-10:00
AM

WELCOME REMARKS

10:00-11:30
AM

PANEL 1: COMMERCIAL AFFORDABILITY PILOT PROJECT

The Pilot project was developed with the intent to identify and test ways to support small business owners who either have been displaced or are at risk of being displaced from their neighborhoods due to rising costs and lack of access to capital. Panelists will provide an overview of the pilot and their reflections and learnings from the project's implementation, and insight into how and where the learnings and work of the pilot are being applied now.

Panelists: Ana Castro (Salvadorean Bakery), Zenovia Harris (Kent Chamber of Commerce, TAG Member), Terrell Jackson (Jackson's Catfish Corner), Melissa Lafayette (NDC), Darren Medina, Faisal Mohamad (SeaTac International Mall), Aparna Rae (Moving Beyond), Che Wong (Craft3)

**11:30-12:30
PM**

LUNCH

Provided by Salvadorean Bakery

**12:30-1:30
PM**

KEYNOTE AND CONVERSATION WITH OSCAR PERRY ABELLO

Senior Economic Justice Correspondent at NextCity.org covering alternative economic models and policies in cities across the country

**1:30-2:45
PM**

PANEL 2: MODELS FOR SMALL BUSINESS COMMERCIAL AFFORDABILITY & CAPITAL ACCESS

Small businesses are integral to the economic fabric and communities of King County, but systemic inequities, racism, and financial and environmental pressures stifle emerging entrepreneurs and contribute to the displacement of established businesses – including higher rent prices for commercial space, low vacancy rates, and inequitable access to capital and resources to support growth. This panel will talk about current approaches and programming happening to increase community & shared ownership opportunities and fixed & affordable rental costs to keep neighborhood businesses in place and support displaced business owners in returning to their communities.

Panelists: Chera Amlag (Seattle Office of Economic Development), Chuck Depew (NDC), Ken Takahashi (JP Morgan Chase), Tina Vlasaty (LISC Puget Sound)

**2:45-4:00
PM**

PANEL 3: MODELS FOR SMALL BUSINESS COMMERCIAL AFFORDABILITY & CAPITAL ACCESS

Securing permanently affordable commercial spaces, creating pathways for building and controlling community wealth through entrepreneurship and property ownership, and shifting resources out of the speculative/private market to community and collective stewardship – panelists are leading different institutions and programs making meaningful material changes with the communities they are rooted in. This conversation will delve into the work happening outside of extractive economic models, that is building regenerative, cooperative, and just structures for community determination and thriving here in King County and beyond.

Panelists: Dion Cook (Denkyem Co-Op), Olisa Enrico (Cultural Space Agency), Njuguna Gishuru (People's Economy Lab), Michael Seiwerath (SEED), Noni Session (East Bay Permanent Real Estate Cooperative)

**4:00-4:15
PM**

CLOSING

**4:15-6:00
PM**

NETWORKING RECEPTION

COO is a public-private-community initiative, funded by King County through Best Starts for Kids levy and the Seattle Foundation, that works through supporting learning, capacity building, community-driven partnerships and systems and policy changes to create greater racial, economic, and health equity so that all youth, families and communities in King County thrive and prosper. www.coopartnerships.org



SPEAKER BIOS



OSCAR PERRY ABELLO

(he/him)

Senior Economics
Correspondent
NextCity.org

KEYNOTE

Oscar Perry Abello is a journalist covering alternative economic models and policies in cities across the country. He is currently senior economic justice correspondent for Next City, an independent, not-for-profit, online publication covering cities from the lens of social, racial and environmental justice. His writing has also appeared in Yes! Magazine, City & State New York, Impact Alpha, Shelterforce, and other outlets.

Oscar is a child of immigrants descended from the former colonial subjects of the Spanish and U.S. imperial regimes in the Philippines. He was born in New York City, and raised in the inner-ring suburbs of Philadelphia. He has a bachelor's degree from Villanova University, where he majored in economics and minored in peace and justice studies. He spent several years embedded in the international development industry before transitioning into journalism full-time in 2015. He currently lives in Washington Heights with his domestic partner and the two most photogenic kitties in the world.

A trained urban planner, Ishmael Nuñez is a recognized leader at the intersection of racial equity and placemaking. His work includes facilitation and hands-on work with place management organizations and public entities. His work on culturally responsive placemaking, a participatory approach to equitable community development has been featured in conferences, industry best practices, and workshops both locally and nationally. Ishmael holds a master's degree in urban planning from the University of Washington.

ISHMAEL NUÑEZ

(he/him)

Partner
BDS Planning
& Urban Design

FACILITATOR



MICHAEL BROWN

Seattle Foundation

SPEAKER

Michael Brown is the Chief Architect of Civic Commons, an initiative of Seattle Foundation. Civic Commons serves the region by providing the tools to lead the development and practice of civic engagement, shared responsibility, and aligned efforts capable of making change and driving improved outcomes. Michael served as the Foundation's Vice President of Community Programs, where he oversaw the Foundation's community impact efforts, strategic grantmaking initiatives, convening activities, and impact investing program.

Since beginning his tenure at the foundation in 2001, Michael has led efforts to elevate community voice and foster public-private partnerships, tackling complex challenges in the areas of affordable housing, economic and racial equity, policy, and advocacy. He led the development of the Seattle Foundation's Center for Community Partnerships, which focuses directly on targeted efforts to achieve greater racial and economic equity.

Ana has led an extraordinary career by co-founding a thriving business that has become a cornerstone of the white center community. Ana has been recognized as a pillar of the community and has been engaged with the White Center CDA (Community Development Association) in an effort to cement the Salvadorean bakery as a legacy business that will continue to be part of the fabric of the community for years to come.

ANA CASTRO

Co-President
Salvadorean Bakery

PANELIST



As the Co-founder of the Salvadorean bakery and restaurant in 1996 for over 26 years she has been able to successfully navigate the ups and down of the economic cycles and created a stable and thriving business. Through her hard work commitment and determination she has giving the community a place to share meals and create lasting memory by through the products and services they offer from small birthday cakes to elaborate wedding cakes and other Salvadorean foods and products.



PANELIST

ZENOVIA HARRIS

Kent Chamber of Commerce, Commercial Affordability Pilot Technical Advisory Group

Zenovia Harris is the CEO of the Kent Chamber of Commerce, and the recipient of the 2023 Larry Gossett Service Award. In 2019, Harris became the first Black CEO of the Kent Chamber in its 70-plus years. She previously worked nearly nine years for the University of Phoenix-Western Washington - the first five years as an advocate for students in an enrollment advisor's role, the last four as an operations manager, a liaison who provides resources and answers for students and administration.

Zenovia strives to ensure economic equality remains a crucial factor for healthy communities. In 2019, Zenovia became the CEO of the Kent Chamber of Commerce, playing an instrumental role in leading the Kent Chamber in its equity work. This comes naturally for Zenovia, who also leads other Chambers throughout King County, including the Renton Chamber, Kirkland Chamber, and Seattle Southside Chamber.

Terrell Jackson is the grandchild of Woodrow and Rosemary Jackson who opened "Seattle's Original" Catfish Corner in 1985. Terrell worked there since he was 14 years old. His grandparents sold the business in 2009. It has since closed its doors. He did not want his grandparents legacy to die which inspired him to reopen and rename the business as "Jackson's" Catfish Corner. He strives to make sure that each and every customer is greeted and treated equally. Jackson's Catfish Corner is a family owned business and we like to think of our customers as family also.

TERRELL JACKSON

*Owner
Jackson's Catfish Corner*



PANELIST



PANELIST

MELISSA LAFAYETTE

National Development Council (NDC)

Melissa LaFayette is a West Region Field Director based in Washington State. She provides technical assistance to communities across the Pacific Northwest and Nevada in the areas of housing and economic development finance, with a focus on small business development and commercial affordability. She has been with NDC for 6 years, and during that time, has managed multiple small business revolving loan funds, underwritten small business and real estate projects, and supported communities to develop and implement COVID-19

relief programs for small businesses. Ms. LaFayette is a certified Economic Development Finance Professional. Prior to joining NDC, Ms. LaFayette served as a Community Economic Development volunteer in the Peace Corps and worked for several community development organizations. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Gonzaga University and a master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Washington.

Darren Medina is a small business consultant with over 30 years of experience leading the design and development of restaurant and retail spaces for regional and global brands, while also providing services to small businesses in site specific execution (design, documentation, permitting, construction administration). Currently, Darren is providing technical assistance and consulting to government & non-profit organizations in their efforts to support small business development, specifically in communities of opportunity.

DARREN MEDINA

*Principal
Darren Medina
Design*



PANELIST



FAISAL MOHAMED

(he/him)

Owner
SeaTac International Mall

PANELIST

Faisal Mohamed was born in Mogadishu Somali and raised in Fargo, North Dakota. Faisal has a bachelor's degree in business management from North Dakota State University and is currently pursuing a commercial real estate development certificate from Cornell university. Faisal has 8 years of domestic and international corporate work experience, spanning multiple sectors of global supply chain management. Faisal has served as an ambassador of the South Side Chamber of Commerce from 2020- end of 2022. Starting January 2023, Faisal has served on the board

of directors of the Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce. Faisal also serves on the King County Equitable Development Initiative work group.

As a business partner, Faisal was instrumental in the planning, development, and operationalizing of the management of the SeaTac International Mall, a 9000 sq ft, mixed-use facility with 30 BIPOC multicultural small businesses. Currently, Faisal is the principal of Core Consulting which is a BIPOC led technical advisory firm. Core consulting first handedly understands the importance of policies and development expertise that address short- and long-term systematic roadblocks that have historically plagued marginalized and underrepresented communities. We provide case specific technical advisory to individuals and organizations seeking to achieve project goals in an efficient and timely manner.

Faisal has a passion for community development projects and policies that address the growing gentrification and displacement crisis throughout the country. In his spare time, Faisal enjoys spending time with his family, hiking, playing basketball and traveling.

Aparna Rae is the founder of Moving Beyond, supporting fund managers, wealth advisors, impact-investors, philanthropists, and other social innovators creating positive impact for people and the planet.

Aparna works at the intersection of D&I and organizational design. In 2015 she launched Firki India's first online teacher education platform supporting 1 million educators in its first year and in 2019 she launched Future for Us, a platform to advance women of color at work and grew a professional community of 11,000.

Her work has been featured in Forbes, Seattle Magazine, Business Insider, PSBJ, and Melinda Gates's Evoke Magazine. She been a presenter on the intersection of diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) with program design and evaluation at SXSW, The American Evaluation Association, SOCAP, Global Impact Investing Network, as well a number of Greater Seattle Area organizations, including Equal Pay Today, Equal Rights Advocates, WASBA, Legal Fund of Washington, Seattle University and more.

Having lived and worked in six countries, Aparna brings a diversity lens to all her work.

APARNA RAE

Founder
Moving Beyond



PANELIST



CHE WONG

Senior Business Lender, VP
Craft3

PANELIST

Che is a Sr. Business Lender and VP for Craft3. She leads Craft3's Equitable Lending Program which focuses on improving access to capital for entrepreneurs of color. Che has worked in community development finance her entire professional career.

In her own words, "I am fueled by the amazing and inspiring entrepreneurs we get to work with every day."

In addition to time spent with her family, Che enjoys traveling and discovering new cultures through food.



PANELIST

CHERA AMLAG

(she/her)

Commercial Affordability & Real Estate Advisor
Seattle Office of Economic Development

Blue Scholars, a Seattle-based rap duo who's lyrics tackle current events, socioeconomic differences, and Filipino-American social issues.

Chuck Depew is a Director for the National Development Council, a national non-profit that provides economic and community development assistance. Chuck provides technical assistance in project finance, development negotiation and housing finance to communities throughout the Northwest, and the Monterey Bay Area. Recent work has focused on capital deployment with establishment of a \$105 million Washington State business recovery loan fund (Flex Fund) and expansion of NDC capital programs with a revenue-based model being developed with Washington State's SSBCI program. Seattle has partnered recently on a unique commercial real estate affordability collaboration with minority business owners.

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. Active in the NMTC industry, Chuck has closed and/or been involved in transactions exceeding \$400 million.

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.

CHUCK DEPEW

(he/him)

National Development Council (NDC) & Business Community Ownership Fund (BCOF)



PANELIST



PANELIST

KEN TAKAHASHI

(he/him)

Vice President, Northwest Regional Director
JPMorgan Chase & Co

Ken Takahashi is the Pacific Northwest Regional Director for Community Engagement at JPMorgan Chase. He has over 20 years of experience leading community engagement, economic development financing and technical assistance programs.

Ken has developed a strong foundation of relationships with a wide range of community stakeholders, including small businesses, neighborhood organizations, nonprofits, and CDFIs. Prior to joining JPMorgan Chase, Ken was the

Commercial Affordability Director at the City of Seattle - Office of Economic Development where he established and managed the City's New Markets Tax Credit program, managed HUD loan programs, and administered COVID-19 recovery grant and small business technical assistance programs.

Ken holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Rochester and a Juris Doctor degree from Washington University School of Law. He currently serves as Board Vice Chair of Evergreen Business Capital (SBA 504 lender and CDFI).



TINA VLASATY

Deputy Director
LISC Puget Sound

PANELIST

Tina has spent 20+ years working in community and economic development, working both for community-based organizations and local government. Her experience includes small business and affordable housing finance, workforce development, program and policy development, and community engagement. Tina has also worked in the health arena, with Washington's global health community and health equity impact investing.

Tina's roles have included serving as Chief Operating Officer at the Washington Global Health Alliance, Deputy Director for the City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development and Senior Business Lender at Craft3. She received her MBA from Washington University and her undergraduate training in Russian and Eastern European Studies, from University of Illinois.

Tina is excited to be working to increase equitable economic opportunities and well-being in Puget Sound. She supports the development of LISC Puget Sound's strategic direction and champions its programs.

Dion has a background in business, entrepreneurship, and education. He is now using his learned skills and passion to promote community economic development. As the Founder & CEO of Denkyem Co-op, Dion works towards creating safe pathways for Black entrepreneurship and innovation. Denkyem Co-op provides technical assistance and uses revenue-based financing to invest in a thriving Black Business Community that serves as an anchor for Black economic mobility.

DION COOK

CEO
Denkyem Co-Op

PANELIST



OLISA ENRICO

Cultural Space Agency

PANELIST

Olisa "Spyc-E" Enrico is a performing artist, educator and administrator who believes that story is essential in the cultivation of community and culture. Born and raised in Seattle, Washington to a multicultural music family, Olisa spent her childhood composing and performing. She traversed genres of music and rooted in hip hop as her primary form of poetic expression. As she grew in music she branched out to theater and found passion for the power of story to reveal and heal. Olisa is a master facilitator with www.TheConciliationProject.org.

TCP utilizes dramatic work to start courageous conversations around the inequities that are woven into the fabric of this complex nation to repair its damaging legacy. She is a founding member of www.GriotGirlz.org a collective of Black Womxn artists committed to utilizing the power of story to reveal truths and heal abuse through performance, education and event production. Her business, Praxis Essentials llc, provides performances, workshops and consultation services. She acknowledges the pivotal role that the arts played on her journey to adulthood and credits her involvement with the arts as the reason she is powerful and resilient. It is in this truth that Olisa works in and for the arts.

Njuguna Gishuru is a Seattle based community development consultant who specializes in developing restorative economic strategies for oppressed communities, building capacity and enhancing access to capital for entrepreneurs of color and cultivating new economies that advance empowerment and social justice for all. Njuguna's personal background and extensive experience in banking, consumer protection and community development make him uniquely suited to serve the needs of Black, Indigenous and People of Color for greater economic empowerment. Njuguna currently serves as a Director on the Boards of the African Chamber of Commerce of the Pacific Northwest, Urban Family, the Multicultural Community Coalition (MCC) and One Vibe Africa. He is the son of two of Seattle's most renowned African community leaders and is deeply committed to advancing their legacy of service in Washington and beyond.

NJUGUNA GISHURU

Lab Leader
People's Economy Lab

PANELIST





PANELIST

MICHAEL SEIWERATH

Executive Director
*Seattle Southeast Effective
Economic Development
(SEED)*

Michael Seiwerath (SIGH-wrath) has two decades of experience working on affordable housing, cultural space, and community building issues in Seattle. Prior to SEED, he led fund development, communications, and government relations for Community Roots Housing (formerly Capitol Hill Housing). At Community Roots, he was instrumental in the creation of the 12th Avenue Arts building as well as launching the Capitol Hill EcoDistrict, the Capitol Hill Arts District, and the \$25 Million collaborative Rise Together campaign. Prior to Community

Roots, as Executive Director of Northwest Film Forum, he elevated the film arts organization to a position of national prominence and led the development of its current home. Seiwerath serves on the Governing Counsel of Cultural Space Agency in Seattle. Previously he has served on the Seattle Arts Commission (chair), Washington Low Income Housing Alliance State Legislative Committee, Seattle Asian Art Museum Community Advisory Group, and the Cal Anderson Park Alliance Advisory Council.

Noni is a 3rd generation West Oaklander, cultural anthropologist, and grassroots organizer. As an Oakland native, Noni's diverse formative, academic and professional background contributes to her unique approach to economic development. Noni cut her academic teeth on the challenge of equitable international economic development. As a Fulbright-Hays fellow she studied international humanitarian strategies for developing communities globally. Upon completing her Doctoral work, she helped found several small scale collective civic action networks. After a 2016 run for city council where she garnered more than 43% of the District 3 vote, Noni saw a clear path to ameliorating resource disparities in her West Oakland community-- by building more cooperative networks and galvanizing opportunities for collective economic action. She co-founded EB PREC on the belief that her community's clearest pathway to economic justice and to the halt of rapid displacement was a cooperative economy.

NONI SESSION

**Co-Founder and
Executive Director**
*East Bay Permanent Real
Estate Cooperative*



PANELIST

SPONSOR BIOS



CASCADIA CONSULTING GROUP

Keynote Sponsor

We're a women-owned consulting firm, committed to community and grounded in science.

Cascadia Consulting Group is a small, WBE certified consulting firm in business since 1993.

We are more than 75 dedicated experts and administrators working out of main offices in Seattle, Washington and Oakland, California as well as remote stations across the United States. Offering a broad range of interdisciplinary expertise across environmental, health, and community sectors, Cascadia specializes in using science to shape meaningful, defensible, and durable solutions that governments, organizations, and institutions can own now and into the future.



HEADWATER PEOPLE

HEADWATER PEOPLE

We are a Native-owned and led team that started from community organizing and coalition building. Our team practices are informed by graduate studies in Organization Development but primarily rooted in the continuity of learned values, techniques, and models that are taught in our own tribes, clans, and families. Our practice is rooted in honoring each person's authenticity as a part of our shared practice. At the intersection of our unique experiences and beliefs is a shared belief that humans evolve together. We celebrate ourselves and our presence highlights how versatile leadership is fluid - not just within an individual, but within a group. Our practice is rooted in a world view of continuity with people and place that are longer and wider than the colonial and imperial worldview. Our practice centers the voice of disenfranchised people. This is necessary for systems change.