



Equitable Development Initiative 2019 Cohort | Detroit, Michigan

In 2019, the second cohort of Detroit Equitable Development Initiative participants engaged in a learning series focused on multifamily and mixed-use development in Detroit. The series covered real estate development finance, the real estate development process, the Detroit development context, and “scaling up” to larger projects. All program participants formed groups that proposed a development opportunity for City-owned property on Detroit’s east side.



Diamond Bates is a Flint Native who returned to Detroit to join the construction scene. She has been involved in numerous projects throughout the city and is using her knowledge in construction & real estate to focus on inclusion in the redevelop process.



John Davis is a native Detroiter who has been working in the corporate real estate field for the past 17 years, both locally and globally, including his current role at Ford Land Development. John intends to combine new knowledge with his corporate experience to bring affordable, well executed projects to neighborhoods and residents who have yet to enjoy the benefits of Detroit’s resurgence.



Beverly Beard is the President and CEO of Beard Associates, Inc, a minority, woman-owned firm which specializes in facilities maintenance, commercial and residential renovation and environmental testing and remediation. Beverly is very

passionate about the future of Detroit and trains young people to be entrepreneurs by teaching positive ethics, work skills and hands on training in various construction trades.



Essence Hickman is a Detroiter and the owner Precision Property MGMT LLC, which specializes in the renovation and repositioning of single-family residences in Detroit. She is invested in the City and wants to elevate her impact on the City’s real estate movement through mixed use commercial development.



Tarolyn Buckles is the founder and owner of Onyx Enterprise, headquartered in downtown Detroit, and has been a leading professional in water resource and transportation projects, civil engineering and construction for over 30 years. She has also served

as a pioneering member of many minority-led associations and is a mentor to young engineers and aspiring small businesses.



Randal Jean-Baptiste relocated to Detroit from New York City and founded The RJB Group of Companies in 2015 to acquire, develop and manage residential and mixed-use real estate. He has established the primary goal of increasing the affordable housing options for Detroit residents who are seeking to participate in the city’s redevelopment movement.



Kyra Jefferson is a Detroiter with multiple degrees and professional experience in business and human resources. Her real estate venture is focused on renovating and repositioning rental properties in the city. Her goal is to scale up her business and refine her model to include a skilled labor training module aimed at accelerating growth in the multi-family residential and commercial development sectors.



Edward Carrington is a resident of Detroit and has over a decade of property renovation experience in the Detroit/Metro area. As a huge fan of both technology and real estate, he aims to lead his company, Flux City, to be a leading developer of smart and sustainable

urban neighborhoods within Detroit.



Marc Johnson is a native Detroiter and licensed real estate professional who has been actively investing in the City of Detroit for over 20 years with multiple firms. He has played an instrumental role in several educational developments and is focused on growing the commercial and multi-family residential sectors, with a focus on affordable and market rate offerings.



Marcus Jones had a background in custom home building prior to pursuing a dual-masters in Urban Planning and Real Estate Development from the University of Michigan. Drawn by the opportunity to rebuild Detroit neighborhoods, Marcus co-founded the Detroit

Training Center and created the Detroit Blight Task Force's Blight Removal Training Program. He is focused on developing high quality, healthy affordable housing for underserved communities.



Ashley McLeod an engineer and native Detroit who returned to the City to play a key role in its redevelopment. A former management consultant, Ashley works on strategic economic development initiatives for the City of Detroit and looks forward to future opportunities

to develop a mixed use real estate portfolio focused on local businesses and providing diverse and affordable offerings for residents.



Marcel Pearl was born and raised in Detroit and is a broker for Cohn Commercial Properties, with a focus on improving properties within the city. Marcel's future business ventures will include a commercial real estate brokerage with an emphasis on multi-family residential and retail uses, and

development company focused on mixed use projects in city neighborhoods.



Frank Romo moved to Detroit 5 years ago and has utilized his background in urban planning, architecture and engineering to explore new opportunities in real estate development, with a focus on the Islandview & Greater Villages area. Frank has demonstrated his

commitment to community engagement by running workshops on real estate development for local residents.



Sherita Smith serves as the executive director for the Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation (GRDC) and has an extensive background in the community development field. She is focused on deepening her real estate expertise, growing GRDC's real estate capacity, and learning new strategies

for aligning three strands of development: human, business and real estate.



John Truong is a Southwest Detroit who has real estate and land use planning experience with multiple public agencies, and he has worked closely with City of Detroit government leaders in economic development. In his current role as a consultant, John oversees strategic acquisitions of single-family rehab and land assembly projects for various developers. He has a future interest in mixed-use development and senior housing in the city.



Duane Washington is a native Detroit and was a longtime resident prior to leaving for college. Dedicated to the revitalization of Detroit, he returned to complete his degree in Electrical / Electronic Engineering and is now pursuing a career in real estate development. He has since devoted his time and financial resources to help revitalize Detroit and its neighborhoods one project at a time.



Ronald Weaver is a born and raised Detroit and his company, Management Systems, is headquartered on the city's northwest side. He is a career property manager and development consultant with experience managing market rate housing, affordable housing and commercial properties. His goal is to create a high capacity development firm that will cater to small and mid-size mission driven developers.



Corey Williams is a fourth generation, life-long Detroit, Corey's roots in Detroit are deep. He became a licensed realtor in 2001 and soon found his passion for real estate development. In 2004, he began his career by purchasing and revitalizing distressed corporate owned properties primarily in a collection of neighborhoods and commercial corridors on Detroit's northwest side.



Tracey Yurko was born and educated in Detroit. As the owner of Western Wayne Real Estate Investments, she owns a portfolio of single-family residences in the city. Her long-term career goal is to scale up into the development of mixed-use, multi-family apartments and commercial projects, while preserving the historic integrity of Detroit's existing real estate.

For more information about the Equitable Development Initiative in Detroit, please contact

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