



## Housing Equity Accelerator Fellowship 2022 Cohort

The ability for developers of color to help shape and increase access to affordable housing in rapidly developing cities remains hampered by the fact these individuals remain underrepresented in the real estate development industry. To support developers in the Washington metropolitan area to overcome these barriers to success, Capital Impact Partners is implementing the Housing Equity Accelerator Fellowship. This program, funded by a grant from the Amazon Housing Equity Fund, seeks to increase the number of real estate developers of color in real estate, and help to grow the amount of affordable housing stock in the Washington metropolitan area.

The Housing Equity Accelerator Fellowship builds on Capital Impact's successful Equitable Development Initiative training program for emerging real estate developers of color across the country. The fellowship includes: advanced real estate training with a focus on affordable housing; connections to local mentors; and opportunity to apply for grant capital to support early-stage project development.



### Alexis Blakely McKinney

Alexis Blakely McKinney has more than 15 years of expertise in real estate, regulatory compliance and public relations. She is co-founder and vice president of development at Rosewood Strategies, where she focuses on operations, due diligence, project management, and predevelopment

activities. Rosewood Strategies is a DC-based real estate development and advisory firm concentrating in multifamily housing and high-impact community projects serving established nonprofit organizations with their real estate needs. In its advisory capacity, Rosewood specializes in development management, financing, New Markets Tax Credit transactions, helping clients to raise debt, equity, grants, and tax credits. Active advisory projects range from \$19M - \$65M and include D.C. Central Kitchen, Washington Area Community Investment Fund, and Jubilee Housing, among others. As a developer, Rosewood's focus is on coliving – a niche within the multifamily sector that creates workforce housing opportunities, without the need for government subsidies. Alexis led the development and entitlement efforts for Rosewood's inaugural development, a 25,700 SF coliving project in Ivy City. Rosewood's coliving portfolio is comprised of three properties across D.C., totaling over \$40.5M and 88,817 SF. She is an alumna of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.



### Ayesha M. Johnson

President and CEO of A-Peace, LLC Ayesha M. Johnson has been in the business of residential property ownership and management for more than 20 years. A-Peace, LLC now provides property management services for a \$6 million rental portfolio in the region. Her business

model, providing affordable housing for underserved communities with challenges including low-income, mental health concerns, and transitioning out of homelessness, is growing to encompass a new strategy. This new strategy will serve to educate and elevate those in transitional housing. Ayesha is also working toward creating a residential programming component to provide training and aptitude in critical life skills, including financial literacy. The capstone project, a 17-bed transitional housing facility, will prepare tenants for their eventual transition into permanent housing. In turn, A-Peace will offer permanent housing to successful candidates when available. Ayesha is an alumna of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.



### **Chi My Perrus**

Chi Perrus has spent decades gathering experience in real estate finance, commercial lending, underwriting, and analysis. Some of this experience includes work for CDFI banks such as City First Bank of D.C. and Harbor Bank of Maryland, and community banks such as Monument Bank and Sandy Spring Bank. There, Chi processed, financed, managed, and negotiated hundreds of millions of dollars in commercial real estate projects during his banking career. Chi's track record in banking made it a natural transition to real estate investment and development, becoming the Co-Founder and President of Paragon Construction Group, Inc. based in Hanover, Maryland. Launched in 2017, Paragon started out with small, single-family and rowhome renovations, and grew into boutique multi-family projects of 22 units or less. The firm is now transitioning into affordable housing projects utilizing locally or federally subsidies, and currently has projects valued at \$15 million at various stages of development with completed projects valued at \$6 million. Chi also serves as a Real Estate Development Consultant for Howard University and serves on the loan committee for the Business Finance Group, Inc.



### **DaBrielle Goodwin**

DaBrielle Goodwin was 17 when she started selling single-wide trailers in Florida, her home state. She was too young to qualify for a real estate license, but under the law, selling trailers was like selling a car. Soon, she was flipping trailers and selling real estate. DaBrielle is now president and principal broker of Eluvial Enterprises, Inc., a boutique, real estate brokerage, construction, and development consulting firm. Eluvial specializes in repurposing shipping containers in sustainable, residential, commercial, and mixed-use properties. The firm is a full-service operation guiding customers from acquisition to design, supply, construction, and final delivery. DaBrielle leads a team of eight residential and commercial real estate agents who manage the firm's acquisitions, predevelopment, and property management divisions. With more than 12 years of experience, she has acquired over \$45 million of opportunistic real estate deals, representing over \$150 million dollars in gross asset value in the last three years. DaBrielle is an alumna of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.



### **Christopher Agorsor**

Development is Christopher Agorsor's second career. His first, as a professional soccer player, involved hard work, dedication, and passion. In his second act, Christopher Agorsor is the managing principal for New World Developers, LLC in Washington, D.C. The firm's portfolio is a mix of commercial and residential holdings that include retail shopping centers and multifamily properties in D.C. and Virginia. Christopher oversees investments, development, and the acquisition of potential investment opportunities while balancing relationships with a variety of current and potential capital partners. The firm manages three to four projects a year. Active development projects include a \$7.5 million-dollar multifamily project and a \$27.2 million dollar shopping center. Geared towards families with children, the multifamily unit is a redevelopment of a historic mansion located in a designated opportunity zone. The project will include three-bedroom units, 40% of which are slated for affordable housing.



### **Ernest Williams**

During his 16-year career in finance, Ernest Williams oversaw major finance projects. He has led large-scale acquisitions, built a residential real estate portfolio, supervised regulatory and compliance projects, and created financial models for private entities. This foundation in project management and development was the groundwork that led him to open his own firm. Wiltrust Group, LLC, formed in 2019, specializes in consulting, analysis, feasibility studies, and the leveraging of mid-level, multifamily projects. His past clients include religious institutions, public, and private entities. Ernest became the Senior Manager for Redevelopment and Revitalization of the Prince George's County Redevelopment Authority in 2020. In this capacity, he manages major real estate development projects and performs oversight of community and grant programs aimed at property homeownership and property improvement. Ernest earned his master's degree in Real Estate Development from Georgetown University, where he is a capstone advisor and sits on the board of the Georgetown Real Estate Alumni Association. Ernest is also an alumnus of the Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.



### **Howard M. Ervin**

Howard M. Ervin has been a part of the commercial real estate industry for more than 20 years. His years of experience as a market research analyst, investment broker, project facilitator, and advisor sharpened his talents to a fine point, leading him to open Parallax Development Group in 2012.

As the Managing Member of Parallax Development Group, Howard currently oversees the development of two new construction affordable housing opportunities in suburban Maryland with an aggregate value of \$60,000,000. One year later, Howard expanded his reach into the market and opened Parallax Real Estate Services, a third-party consulting and services firm. He is an expert strategist who understands the importance of developing and maintaining partnerships with public and private stakeholders to ensure success. Parallax Development Group focuses on affordable multi-family development units with an emphasis on senior and family housing. Howard is an alumnus of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.



### **James Forest Hayes**

J. Forest Hayes has vast community development experience, ranging from affordable housing and developments commercial corridors to urban neighborhood transformation and revitalization. Over 20 years, Forest has led the development of more than \$5 billion

in real estate projects. Currently, Forest is president of Miller Beach LLC, his family-owned real estate firm, headquartered in Leesburg, Virginia. Miller Beach owns, operates, and develops all forms of private and publicly funded affordable housing and commercial properties. He was appointed to the Virginia Housing Commission by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam. He is the first African American Chairman of the Loudoun County Planning Commission. He is the former D.C. Director of Real Estate, Director Economic Development for Gary, Indiana, and DC Housing Authority Senior Advisor. Forest is building Miller Beach to achieve the all-important "triple bottom line" through investing and completing development projects in communities he refers to as "overlooked and underserved."



### **Jason Saunders**

Jason Saunders believes there is a real opportunity in focusing on modernizing older existing buildings, including smaller and unusual structures. That was his motivation for creating BHI Construction and Real Estate Development in 2001 in the District. Jason's business model

is a combination of real estate development and construction ventures focused on projects throughout the DMV region. Constructing a product that improves the sustainable performance of a building, the air quality, and overall efficiency not only provides a

comfortable living space, but offers affordability for the tenant and profitability for the owner, creating a win-win experience for both. The company's portfolio has included a 39-unit luxury, affordable condominium. For this project, another floor was added to transform the penthouse level into unique duplexes with spiral staircases and rooftop decks. The firm has also owned and operated three apartment communities purchased with Department of Housing Community Development federal block grant funding and were set aside to help preserve quality workforce housing for D.C. residents.



### **Otis Bledsoe, III**

Otis Bledsoe, III started Home Answers Construction & Development (HACD) in 2014. His initial objective was helping those in underserved communities to maintain and improve their household. The contracts kept getting larger. Home Answers Construction began as a general contracting

company with a special focus on interior infrastructure. Procurement, fulfillment, and construction project management soon became a specialty. Otis prides himself on closely monitoring budgets and saving clients an average of 25% on projected construction costs. Otis' recently completed projects include interior construction for the Department of Human Resources and the D.C. Housing Authority. In the development arena, Otis is in the financing stage for his first project, a 50-unit senior residence in the District. He is partnering with three organizations to build this 100% affordable residence in Ward 7. In July of 2020, Otis completed the Clark Construction Strategic Partnership Training Program. Otis is an alumnus of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.



### **Raymond L. Nix**

Raymond L. Nix's career in real estate development and management spans two decades. Nix Development Company, LLC was founded in 2012 and is a 100 percent minority-owned, certified real estate development and advisory firm. The focus includes transformational, affordable, and

mixed-income housing, neighborhood revitalization, and resident relocation management. Formerly, Nix was the asset manager and development advisor for Fireside Park, a \$64 million dollar recapitalization and renovation of a 236-unit multifamily project in Maryland. In Washington, D.C., Nix led the acquisition and co-developed the rehabilitation of a 218-unit portfolio of scattered-site historic buildings. He acquired development rights through the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Assistance program and subsidies resulting from a public/private partnership with the District of Columbia, including Low Income Housing Tax Credits, tax-exempt bonds and Housing Production Trust Fund monies. Prior to opening Nix Development, Raymond was the managing partner and co-founder of UrbanMatters Development Partners, L.L.C.



**Ronette C. Slamin**

Ronette C. Slamin is the founder and principal of Embolden Real Estate, LLC, a new real estate development and consulting firm based in Washington, D.C. focused on entitlement, stakeholder engagement, and project management.

In the development arena, the firm will focus on mixed-income and mixed-use housing projects. A newcomer in the industry, Embolden Real Estate opened in August of 2021. But Ronette is a seasoned professional. Her 10-year career in real estate development covers community engagement, feasibility reporting, securing funding, marketing strategy, government relations, and more. She has a penchant for delivering large-scale projects that elevate and add value to communities. Her extensive knowledge and expertise on affordable housing regulations, finance, and budget management were honed while managing projects with budgets in excess of \$500 million dollars. Ronette is an alumna of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.

**Thomas E. Houston, III**

Thomas E. Houston, III describes his company, Medici Road, as a "community" development corporation rather than a real estate company. Medici Road takes a four-prong approach to problem-solving that includes research and evaluation, policy, program design, and product

development to empower Black people. Thomas has taken his rich background in marketing, and research and development and used it to reach communities and identify issues that matter to the populations he serves. With that data, he creates systems that focus on education, public health, and housing & economic development to solve them. Through his housing and economic development arm, Thomas has two projects in the pipeline that include a 100-door affordable rental (\$45 million dollar acquisition and renovation) and a 24,000 sq. ft. mixed-use property being developed for housing-ownership with food-based commercial. Thomas is an alumnus of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.

**Tremayne Cobb**

Tremayne Cobb's passion for people, financial management, and real estate, led him to open his own company, TOC Enterprises, LLC in 2020. As a landlord of stabilized rental properties in the D.C. market, Tremayne was able to release rental properties during the pandemic using a

rent-to-own model. He has a clear understanding that wealth building, particularly in the African American community, is achieved through property ownership. In his position as the Acting Deputy Director with the Federal Aviation Administration, Tremayne focuses

on strategic direction and operational oversight, financial policy, operational & property accounting, and reporting amongst many other responsibilities. He specializes in modernizing, streamlining, and standardizing systems to create a more efficient workflow throughout the agency. As he's managed hundreds of contractors and vendors, Tremayne honed his skills as an expert team builder, problem solver, and systems engineer and applied those skills to real estate development in the residential arena. Tremayne is an alumnus of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.

**Valerie A. Sanderlin**

Valerie A. Sanderlin, founder and CEO of FocusWorks Construction & Development, LLC, started her company in 2007 with a mission to invest in distressed properties to re-enter the affordable-living rental market. When she wanted to break into the development game, she joined real estate

clubs, took classes, and surrounded herself with like-minded people. Picking up tips along the way, she now oversees the purchase, renovation, and management of several single and multi-family properties in D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Valerie specializes in the acquisition, renovation, and management of properties in the short-term rental space. More notably, to date, she has personally overseen more than \$27 million dollars in her residential and commercial projects. Her real-world knowledge has been honed for more than 15 years starting with her win-win approach as a developer who executes rehab projects for single-family homes, multi-family properties, and condominium conversions. Valerie is an alumna of Capital Impact Partners' Equitable Development Initiative.

For more information about the Housing Equity Accelerator Fellowship, please contact:

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