

LISC announces first cohort of Rubinger Fellows

Year-long fellowship will fuel groundbreaking programs and research to advance community development

NEW YORK (Nov. 20, 2017)—Ten of the community development field’s most promising local leaders will have the chance to deepen their work around economic opportunity and disseminate their expertise nationally as winners of the inaugural Michael Rubinger Community Fellowship awards, a new program that invests in nonprofit talent from across the country.

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) will award \$40,000 to each fellow, which will support a special project of their choice that addresses critical demands in rural and urban America — from economic development and financial literacy to affordable housing and community engagement. Their overarching goal is to develop innovative solutions that improve the quality of life for people and places, and connect them to the broader economy. Ultimately, the fellowship is intended to embolden and energize these leaders for the work of 21st century community development.

The program is named in honor of Michael Rubinger, LISC’s long-time CEO, who pioneered new approaches to revitalizing communities throughout his 40-year career. One of LISC’s first employees, Rubinger stepped down in 2016 after 17 years at the organization’s helm. The Fellows program was established to honor his legacy of leadership.

“If you were to only look at the billions of dollars LISC has invested over the years, you might miss one of the most fundamental elements of this work: strong local organizations driven by committed professionals who are closely connected to their communities,” said Rubinger.

“They are the staying power of what we do,” he stressed. “Without them, intermediaries like LISC, the public sector, investors and even developers can’t do their jobs effectively. They are essential, and we owe it to our field to find new ways to build and nurture them.”

Rubinger Fellows are professionals that have proven themselves compelling leaders, but who also have a great deal more to contribute to their communities, as well as the capacity to help advance the field as a whole. The fellowship is both a recognition of their success to date and an investment in the future of the community development field as a whole, Rubinger said.

The 10 fellows and their areas of focus for their fellowship year include:

- Bryce Butler, Access Ventures (Louisville, Ky.); *small business lending*
- DeAnna Cummings, Juxtaposition Arts (Minneapolis, Minn.); *creative placemaking*
- Zoraima Diaz-Pineda, Community Development Corporation of Brownsville (Brownsville, Texas); *financial capability/wealth building*
- Brian Guyer, Human Resource Development Council (Bozeman, Mont.); *affordable housing*
- Meredith Levy, Somerville Community Corporation (Somerville, Mass.); *impact lending*
- Kerry McLean, Women’s Housing and Economic Development Corporation (Bronx, N.Y.); *financial capability/wealth building*

- Rami Nashashibi, Inner-City Muslim Action Network (Chicago, Ill.); *nonprofit impact/community engagement*
- 'Alisi Tulua, Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (Los Angeles, Calif.); *financial literacy (youth)/ wealth building*
- Jenifer Wagley, Avenue Community Development Center (Houston, Texas); *leadership development*
- Cindy Wu, Chinatown Community Development Center (San Francisco, Calif.); *nonprofit impact/community engagement*

“This is a trailblazing group that has already fueled life-changing opportunities for thousands of people across the country,” said Maurice Jones, LISC president and CEO. “We want to reward bright, creative professionals and encourage them to stay in community development, knowing that they have opportunities to advance their ideas and lead.”

In addition to awarding financial support, LISC will convene the cohort twice a year to facilitate peer-to-peer learning experiences and provide additional program resources.

Support for the Rubinger Fellowship is provided by Lisa & Dick Cashin and Robert E. Rubin, with additional support from Nancy and George Walker; Bank of America; Citi Foundation; Ford Foundation; The Kresge Foundation; John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; MetLife Foundation; Morgan Stanley; State Farm; The Greater Milwaukee Community Foundation; and Philip D. Murphy.

For more information on the winners and the projects they have designed for their fellowship year, visit www.lisc.org/fellowship.

About LISC

With residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. Since 1980, LISC has invested \$17.3 billion to build or rehab 366,000 affordable homes and apartments and develop 61 million square feet of retail, community and educational space.