

Meet the Speakers

Sandile Hlatshwayo, Board Chair of The Sadie Collective and Economist at the International Monetary Fund

Jocelyn Fontaine, Vice President, Strategic Program Development, Urban Institute

Marionette Holmes, Associate Professor and Chair of the Economics Department at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Holmes' research focuses on the economic impact of public health interventions on communities of color, nationally and internationally. Dr. Holmes has served as a Senior Service Fellow at the Centers for Disease Control Division of Global HIV/AIDS and TB at CDC, where she estimated the economic impact of targeting mature men in South Africa to reduce HIV transmission and assisted in the efficient allocation of PEPFAR dollars to countries such as South Sudan and Ethiopia. She also served as a Senior Service Fellow in the Global Immunization Division, where she estimated the resources required to switch to polio eradication vaccines in Indonesia. Dr. Holmes recently worked with the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists to develop an efficient implementation strategy for collecting mental health indicators across the United States.

Erica Williams, lead for DC Fiscal Policy Institute in achieving its mission to shape racially-just tax, budget, and policy decisions for an antiracist, equitable future. She brings nearly two decades of experience in pursuing racial, gender, and economic justice through public policy, grounded in how fiscal and economic policies can advance or impede justice. Driven by her own lived experience, Erica holds a deep commitment to antiracism, equity, and inclusion, and to centering Black and brown lived experiences in all facets of DCFPI's work. Prior to joining DCFPI, Erica was Vice President for State Fiscal Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and a Study Director at the Institute for Women's Policy Research. Erica holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and Spanish studies from Santa Clara University and a master's degree in international policy from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies.

Elsa Falkenburger, senior research fellow in both the Housing and Communities Division and the Race and Equity Division and is director of the Community Engagement Resource Center at the Urban Institute. She also co-directs the Contextual Analysis and Methods of Participatory Engagement project at the US Department of Health and Human Services and a participatory evaluation for the Partnership for Equitable and Resilient Communities, an initiative of the Melville Charitable Trust. Formerly, she was co-principal investigator of the Promoting Adolescent Sexual Health and Safety project, a 12-year sustained partnership with the DC Housing Authority, community-based organizations, and residents to design and evaluate programming for teens. She regularly provides technical assistance and training, develops practical guides to implementing community-engaged methods focused on equity, and consults on the institutionalization of participatory methods. Falkenburger has a BA in

economics from Boston College and an MPA from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.

Evan Malbrough, native of Smyrna, Georgia. He is a 2020 graduate of Georgia State University with a degree in Public Policy, a minor in Cello Performance, and an inductee to Georgia State University's 2022 40 under 40 class. Evan became a 2020 Puffin Fellow with the Andrew Goodman Foundation. Evan founded the Georgia Youth Poll Worker Project, recruiting 1,000 poll workers for the 2020 general election and 2021 runoff. The ACLU of Georgia officially acquired the Georgia Youth Poll Worker Project in December 2021, and he served as a Voter Access Project Fellow from December 2021 to September 2023. As a fellow, Evan worked to protect on-campus early voting centers in Atlanta and supported ACLU GA's legislative initiatives. After leaving the ACLU, Evan served as the Senior Economic Policy Advisor at the Netherlands Consulate in Atlanta. Finally, Evan works as the Program Manager for Impact with the Andrew Goodman Foundation and the Atlanta Liaison for StartAruba.

Belinda Archibong, Associate Professor of Economics at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). She is also a Senior Fellow with the Global Economy and Development program at the Brookings Institution and a Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). Her research areas include development economics, political economy, economic history, and environmental economics with an African regional focus. Her research investigates the role of historical institutions and environments in inequality in access to public services and in the development of human capital, particularly in education, labor, and health. Her research is published/forthcoming in numerous academic journals, and her work has also been cited by various media outlets, including the New York Times, NPR, and Al Jazeera, and she has given informed testimony on vaccine policy to the US Congress. She received a B.A. in Economics/Philosophy and a Ph.D. in Sustainable Development from Columbia University.

Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman, award-winning economist, author, and speaker focused on economic opportunity, inequality, and the future of work. She earned her M.A. in Public Policy and Economics from Harvard University in 2025 and is pursuing her PhD. She is the youngest recipient of the CEDAW Women's Rights Award. Her first book, *The Black Agenda: Bold Solutions for a Broken System* (St. Martin's, 2022), is the first trade publication to exclusively feature Black scholars and experts across economics, education, health, climate, criminal justice, and technology. Her latest publication, *The Double Tax* (Penguin Random House/Portfolio, 2025), explores the costs women face, why the bill runs higher for Black women and women of color, and how closing the gap helps us all. It was named one of the Best Science Books of 2025 (LA Times).

Anna Gifty's commentary and analysis regularly appear in major outlets, including Forbes, Bloomberg, NBC, NY Times, and NPR.

Nicol Turner Lee, senior fellow in Governance Studies, the director of the Center for Technology Innovation (CTI), and serves as co-editor-in-chief of the TechTank blog and The TechTank Podcast. Her research focuses on the intersection of technology and social justice, spanning from universal access to communications to the design and application of artificial intelligence models. In 2023, Turner Lee developed and launched the AI Equity Lab, which is focused on advancing inclusive, ethical, nondiscriminatory, and democratized AI models and systems throughout the United States and the Global South, including the African Union, India, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Alongside her plethora of publications, Turner Lee released her first, signature book *Digitally invisible: How the internet is creating the new underclass* (2024), which advances a roadmap toward a more just, digital society and economy.

She also recently published a chapter in *The Oxford Handbook on AI Governance* (2022), among other notable publications. Prior to Brookings, Turner Lee was chief research and policy officer at the Multicultural Media, Telecom, and Internet Council (MMTC), and the first director of the Media and Technology Institute at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Turner Lee graduated from Colgate University magna cum laude and has an M.A. and Ph.D. in sociology from Northwestern University. She also holds a certificate in nonprofit management from the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Gbenga Ajilore, Chief Economist at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. He most recently served as a senior advisor in the Office of the Undersecretary for Rural Development at the United States Department of Agriculture. Previously, he was a senior economist at the Center for American Progress and a tenured associate professor of economics at the University of Toledo. His expertise includes regional economic development, macroeconomic policy, and issues in diversity and inclusion. He has been invited to testify before Congress and has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*. He holds a Ph.D in economics from Claremont Graduate University and a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

Gerald Daniels, Associate Professor of Economics at Howard University and former Co Director of the American Economic Association Summer Training Program.

Sarah Sahni, Senior Manager of Economics Pathways at J-PAL North America

Laura Ruiz-Gaona, Research Manager at J-PAL North America

Madison Johnson, Economic Consultant, Bates White Economic Consulting

Quelly Ramos, Economic Consultant, Bates White Economic Consulting

Ben Wolfert, Partner, Bates White Economic Consulting

Diego Silva, Economic Consultant, Bates White Economic Consulting

Cherrah Barclay, a DMV native with a passion for accessible education programs. They are currently the Senior Program Associate at Net Impact, supporting Net Impact Chapters and the Up to Us program, which educates and energizes students and young professionals about the national debt. They are a graduate of Earlham College, where they obtained a Bachelors of Arts in African and African American Studies. Cherrah has over 10 years of experience supporting, volunteering for, and organizing community programs spanning continents. They understand the impact of play as a teacher and a container for connection and learning. They seek to bring a unique, creative style of collaboration to all spaces, supporting people in connecting and recognizing the possibilities of getting a little bit silly while advocating for a more just and liberatory future.

Arun Dahal Khatri, a senior at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), majoring in Financial Economics. He has consistently participated in national and international discussions on fiscal and monetary policy, actively advocating for informed economic decision-making. Known as a leading voice both within his university and the broader community, Arun demonstrates strong leadership and dedication to public engagement. In recognition of his impact, he was named a 2025 Civic Engagement Scholar by Up to Us and received a Civic Engagement Award from UMBC for his outstanding contributions.