

Equity in Atlanta: Defining and Designing

Wednesday afternoon 2:15 – 3:45 p.m.

In Atlanta, as in almost all metro areas in our nation, inequity is explicitly present in major policy areas: early health and educational outcomes, income and wage earning potential, housing choices, transportation options, and health outcomes. Inequities in these areas have either driven, or perhaps have as much been driven by, geographic segregation of races and classes.

Atlanta began to grow and continues to grow in geography, population and jobs. However, inequality and inequity play a key role in shaping the landscape as well. Equity concerns have been exacerbated, or have worsened with the growth that the region has experienced.

To help tackle some of these issues, Neighborhood Nexus was created in 2009 as the premier resource for community data in the state of Georgia. Neighborhood Nexus is a partnership between the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. Neighborhood Nexus is dedicated to improving policy at the local level by both improving access to high-quality data and presenting that data in a way is usable by and useful to a wide audience.

Neighborhood Nexus works with a regional network of information-led leaders and residents, government and businesses, advocates and service providers. We strive to provide community-level data to address critical community issues affecting Atlanta's inequality. Many groups benefit from the open data and visualization tools we maintain on our website while other organizations require customized analysis to produce more granular information to effectively inform policy decisions in their communities.

The panelists in this session work directly in the community to address the enduring challenges of Atlanta's inequality – income, housing, transportation, and race.

Mike Carnathan, Manager of the Research and Analytics Group in the Center for Livable Communities at the Atlanta Regional Commission, will introduce the panel and moderate the session. Mike is a founding member of Neighborhood Nexus, and led its direction and development until 2016. Mike will offer a brief overview of Neighborhood Nexus' theory of change, illustrate Atlanta's inequities, and explain Nexus' engagement efforts in the community to address inequality.

The panelists will discuss the concrete efforts their organizations are making to erode the systemic policies that have allow inequity to exist in Atlanta; they will address examples in several policy domains.

Mike Carnathan will facilitate discussion among the panelists and audience after the panelists' initial remarks.

Panelists:

Rodney Milton, Jr. is the Assistant Director of Neighborhood Revitalization for Atlanta's Department of City Planning. Rodney has experience in affordable housing development, urban planning, and federal program administration. He currently serves as the Director of the Westside Promise Zone and co-leads the University Choice Neighborhood program, both of which are place-and people- based revitalization efforts in Westside neighborhoods.

As an urban planner, Rodney managed Atlanta's Comprehensive Development Plan, the Capital Improvement Plan and redevelopment plans for both Turner Field and Fort McPherson. Rodney has a passion for community development and is a strong advocate for using data to drive decisions.

Frank Fernandez has served as the Vice President of Community Development at the Arthur Blank Foundation since early 2014. In this position, his primary role has been as leader of the Foundation's Westside Neighborhood Prosperity Fund and broader revitalization initiative to transformative Atlanta's Westside neighborhoods. Frank has guided strategic investments of the Westside Neighborhood Prosperity Fund--leveraging additional corporate and philanthropic investments to complement Foundation investments; advocating for policy reform at the local and state levels that address systemic issues that negatively affect Westside and other high poverty neighborhoods; and launching and managing Westside Works, a workforce development center focused on connecting Westside neighborhood residents to living wage job opportunities

Prior to his work on Atlanta's Westside, Frank was involved in lower-income community development in Austin, Texas. He was Executive Director for the Green Doors organization for nearly eight years, where he focused on investments and policy in the arenas of affordable housing, supportive services, and advocacy on issues of poverty and homelessness.

Julia Lankford has served as Atlanta Program Officer for the Laureus Sports Foundation since early 2017. Laureus invests in youth sport organizations nationwide (athletes and coaches) by equipping them to measurably improve the health, education, employment and social cohesion of the youth that they serve. As such, communities across the US can use the power of sport to address critical social justice issues. Laureus has the goal of working in 20 cities by 2020. Prior to joining Laureus, Julia was director of

donor engagement for Families First, a nonprofit aiding the families, communities, and caregivers that surround children, via adoption services, pregnancy and parent counseling, and supportive housing.

Julia applies expertise in program/project management and nonprofit management to plan and develop programs to address community and economic development issues in the areas of neighborhood revitalization, youth leadership/entrepreneurship, and workforce development.

David Jackson has served as Deputy Executive Director for the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (ABP) since 2016. ABP secures private, corporate, and philanthropic support for the Atlanta BeltLine, which is one of the preeminent urban community infrastructure development projects in the southeastern U.S. Through building diverse and broad relationships across all sectors, the Partnership seeks to enable the Atlanta BeltLine project, engage the public, and empower residents in surrounding neighborhoods. ABP also develops dynamic programs to raise awareness, generate advocacy and outreach, and ensure that the Atlanta BeltLine benefits residents of all socioeconomic levels.

David's extensive experience prior to ABP includes two years in the Executive directorship of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in Raleigh, NC; five years as President and CEO for The Center for Working Families in Atlanta; and a Senior Advisorship in Community & Economic Development for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.