**MODERATOR:**

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**Katey Forth**

**Vice President, Public Funding, Cinnaire**

Katey is Executive Vice President, Public Funding, based in our Lansing, MI office. Under her leadership, Cinnaire pursues funding with several CDFI Funding Programs including New Markets Tax Credits, Capital Magnet Funding and Financial Assistance Funding. She provides the strategy and drives Cinnaire’s work with mission-driven partners and others CDFIs to fund community facilities that provide social benefits – including health care and education centers, healthy food options, job creation and training, and affordable housing. Katey takes great satisfaction in working with our partners to support and create communities that improve the lives of people that need it the most.

Katey brings more than 20 years of finance and lending experience to Cinnaire. In her previous position as Cinnaire Lending President, she played a key role in developing capacity building and fundraising initiatives and providing strategic direction on operations and lending products lines. Prior to joining Cinnaire in 2007, she worked as a senior audit manager at Plante & Moran, specializing in real estate and governmental audits.

Katey serves on the boards for the CDFI Coalition, Affiliate Mortgage Services (formerly Habitat for Humanity Michigan Fund) and The Heat & Warmth Fund (THAW). She earned her Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Western Michigan University.



**Marcia Sigal**

**Deputy Director for Policy and Programs, CDFI Fund**

Marcia Sigal is the Deputy Director for Policy and Programs for the CDFI Fund, where she oversees the efforts of all of the CDFI Fund's award programs in support of the CDFI Fund's strategic vision. She previously served as the Program Manager of the Capital Magnet Fund.   
  
Prior to joining the CDFI Fund, Ms. Sigal was the Director of the Program Policy Division for the Office of Affordable Housing Programs in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Ms. Sigal's expertise as a community development policy analyst and innovator served her well as the Director of Community and Economic Development at the Council of State Community Development Agencies, an Affordable Housing Policy Analyst for the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), and Management Analyst at the Fairfax, VA Department of Housing and Community Development.   
  
In these roles, Ms. Sigal has shaped national outcome measurement metrics for community development programs, designed and launched new community development and affordable housing policies and programs, and developed capacity building and technical assistance programs for non-profit organizations as well as state and local governments. She has a Master's Degree in City Planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and attended Cornell University, where she studied community services and social work.

A person smiling in front of a flag

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**Michelle Dickens**

**Program Manager, Certification, Policy and Evaluation, CDFI Fund**

Michelle Dickens is Program Manager for the Office of Certification, Policy and Evaluation at the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI Fund). As Program Manager, Michelle provides oversight of all Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Certification and Community Development Entity (CDE) Certification and related activities that support the associated CDFI Fund Programs.

Prior to joining the CDFI Fund, Michelle’s career focused on local and national non-profit administration and management in the areas of community and economic development. She served as Program Manager for the Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development, Community Investment Tax Credit Program. Additionally, Michelle has provided program oversight at the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, Family League of Baltimore City, National Association of Workforce Boards, and Maryland Employment & Training Institute.

Michelle earned a Master of Public Administration from the University of Baltimore, and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of New York at Albany.

A person in a suit and tie

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**Jeff Merkowitz**

**Senior Advisor, CDFI Fund**

Jeff Merkowitz is Senior Advisor to CDFI Fund Director Jodie Harris and brings over two decades of both policy and direct, on the ground experience in the areas of housing finance and community development. He previously served as Director of Operations and Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer, where he was responsible for crafting the Senator's policy responses to both the foreclosure crisis and the longstanding shortage of affordable housing in California. His work for the Senator to expand refinancing opportunities led to over 2 million struggling homeowners being able to refinance their mortgages at historically low rates, and he led efforts in the Senate to push the Federal Housing Finance Agency to fund the Housing Trust Fund and Capital Magnet Fund.

Prior to his time in the Senate, Merkowitz served as the Chief Financial Officer for Opportunity Fund, a certified CDFI. There he created the financial infrastructure to manage over $25 million in lending programs for affordable housing development and small businesses, as well as receive and distribute $50 million in New Markets Tax Credit allocations, and developed key partnerships with local and national banks. While in California, he also was a director on the board of InnVision, the largest homeless services provider in the South Bay.

Additionally, Merkowitz served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Costa Rica, where he organized local women's groups to start up small businesses and provided assistance to rural communities with small development projects such as bridges, roads, health posts, and potable water projects. He is a graduate of Princeton University and earned a MBA from the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.

A person smiling for the camera

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**Pooja Patel**

**Program Manager, CDFI Program and Native Initiatives, CDFI Fund**

Pooja Patel is the Program Manager for the CDFI Program and Native Initiatives. Pooja has nearly 20 years of experience related to federal affordable housing and community economic development programs. Prior to joining the CDFI Fund, Pooja was a Senior Director at ICF. In this role, she managed a portfolio of projects focused on the successful design and administration of federal community development programs, including establishing and evaluating policies, guidelines, and methodologies that guide program operations.

A person in a suit and tie

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**Andrew Schlack**

**Program Manager, Capital Magnet Fund, CDFI Fund**

Andrew Schlack is the Program Manager for the Capital Magnet Fund (CMF). He joined the CDFI Fund in April 2017, and previously served as the Acting Program Manager, and Associate Program Manager, for the CDFI Program, and Native Initiatives team.

Mr. Schlack has over twenty years of affordable housing and community development finance experience. Prior to joining the CDFI Fund, he was Director of Investments at Calvert Impact Capital where he managed a team of finance professionals overseeing a portfolio of roughly $120 million invested directly into CDFIs, affordable housing developers, and other social enterprises. Prior to that, he served as Program and Loan Officer with the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund (GMHF) where he helped develop and manage GMHF’s multifamily and single-family interim loan products, assisted in launching the Minnesota Equity Fund, oversaw GMHF’s state-wide foreclosure recovery initiative, and assembled capital to support neighborhood stabilization efforts.

Mr. Schlack holds a Master of Architecture, as well as a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Minnesota’s Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs.