



## Equitable Development Initiative 2022 Cohort | Detroit, MI

Our fifth Detroit Equitable Development Initiative learning series is focused on multifamily and mixed-use development in Detroit. Through lecture, panel discussions, breakout sessions, and group projects, the series covers real estate development finance, the real estate development process, the Detroit development context, and “scaling up” to work on larger projects.



### **Kaiwan Bowman**

Kai Bowman is the Chief Operating Officer of the Metro Detroit Black Business Alliance. Prior to joining MDBBA, he served as the Executive Director for Development in the Mayor’s Office. In this role, he negotiated over \$35M in community benefits as part of a \$2.5B FCA plant expansion deal

generating 5,000 new jobs. Kai seeks to do his part in ensuring Detroit is developed equitably and responsibly. In 2013, he led a group to acquire properties in the New Center neighborhood with hopes of eventually completing a mixed-use development. His most recent project was the rehab of a 100-year-old duplex in the Chadsey-Condon neighborhood. Having completed that project, he is now on a mission to find a balance of projects that will help bring units back online for existing Detroiters who want to remain in their beautiful city, as well as introduce modern design concepts for new housing development. Kai believes that his purpose in life is to take his personal and professional experiences and impart those to the next generation.



### **Miles Brown**

Founder of Malicorp Development Group, a real estate development firm committed to quality affordable housing, community preservation, and placemaking in Detroit. Miles’ background includes accounting, single-family residential development, commercial real estate management,

and small-business management. With Malicorp Development Group, Miles hopes to utilize his skills and experiences to create an impact on the trajectory of the City of Detroit. By building and restoring quality affordable housing, Miles intends to make sure that legacy Detroiters are at the center of the city’s resurgence. As a Detroit native, he looks to his combined experiences within the city itself, New York, and Washington D.C. as inspiration and an opportunity to offer a fresh perspective. As Miles continues to restore multi-family properties around the city, he is also excited to move forward into new construction and the development of larger properties.



**Ponce D. Clay**

Ponce D Clay combines his passions for advocacy, public service, and real estate ownership in his brokerage and law practice. A serial learner, Ponce is a licensed attorney, real estate broker, and candidate for the Michigan Residential Builder (Contractor’s) license. As Founder of Clay Realty, Investment and Development Co.; an urban-centric firm that delivers tailored solutions for its clients in real estate acquisition/disposition, distressed vacant space activation, and preservation of generational homeownership. In his role as Managing Attorney of Clay Law PLC, a general practice firm that defends tenants against non-compliant Landlords—Ponce seeks to preserve the rights and protect low-moderate income tenants in the volatile Detroit rental market. As a former tax auction investor, he initially acquired distressed real property in Highland Park and Detroit. After making improvements, he sold it for a profit of more than 350%. His next professional real estate goal is to partner and collaborate with his Detroit Equitable Development colleagues, learn the deliberate mechanics of project pro forma planning, and seek development of mixed-use, multi-family apartments, and commercial projects—more specifically on Dexter Blvd and Hamilton Ave.



**Art Hicks**

President and Founder of Masterpiece, Inc., a local corporation dedicated to rebuilding Detroit communities by purchasing and restoring homes in the Detroit Metropolitan area. He is a dual degree graduate of Eastern Michigan University and an active member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Art has rehabbed 7 single-family homes, 13 duplexes, 10 2-family flat homes, and 4 commercial properties primarily on the city’s northwest side in the Bagley, Warrendale, Morning Side, and University District. Art is also at the helm of MasterLiving, Inc., serving as its Chief Executive Officer. He inspires by his leadership, personal accomplishments and integrity. He is not only involved in community service and fundraising projects; he also makes noteworthy contributions to the goals and aims of entrepreneurship and philanthropic offerings. Art has received numerous awards for his contributions to the community and his philanthropic endeavors.



**Rashard Dobbins**

Rashard uses the knowledge and skills he garnered as a W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) and Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) Community Leadership Network fellow to generate equitable community, combat gentrification, and empower diverse local voices, children, and working families. He has over ten years of experience as a performer and production professional in the entertainment industry. He has worked on projects such as The Walking Dead, The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, All Eyez On Me, and The Internship, to name a few. In 2017, Rashard combined his unique background into a 501(c)3 nonprofit, Class Act Detroit, that utilizes hip-hop elements to reach and teach adolescent scholars in his hometown of Southeast Michigan, where he currently serves as the Executive Director and co-founder. Today he nurtures racial and creative sanctuaries across the city by designing and leading culturally relevant community spaces in Detroit.



**Tekisha Lee**

Tekisha Lee is the Founder and CEO of DiverseNote and DiverseNote Mobility. She has large-scale commercial development experience through her time at an architecture firm that developed airport terminals at some of the country’s largest airports, including the McNamara Terminal at DTW. Tekisha is currently in the middle of a mixed-use development project in Midtown that consists of over 100,000 square feet of mixed-use space. Tekisha brings twenty (20) years of experience in the development, implementation, and management of curriculum and strategic plans for technology-driven industries, creating the workforce of now and the future. Tekisha has led national and international workforce and economic mobility initiatives for the U.S. Dept. of State, U.S. Social Security Administration, U.S. Department of the Interior and other Federal and local workforce organizations and private sector companies. Tekisha is a Howard University alum. DiverseNote Mobility is an accelerated career training academy that increases access to affordable higher education and career mobility through training and career placement in high-growth industries.



**Bobby D. Lewis Sr.**

Bobby has a lifelong passion for Real Estate. As a Licensed Realtor for over 35 years, he has had the privilege of assisting countless Businesses, Families and Individuals through all aspects of Real Estate transactions.

Over the past 26 years, working dually as a Financial Analyst for a major automotive OEM, Bobby has gained valuable insight and expertise in complex project management, both at a Corporate and private sector level. In 2005 Bobby Founded Lewis Holdings Development LLC, a Company dedicated to providing quality affordable housing options. Raised in Highland Park and educated locally at Wayne State University earning an MBA in Finance and BA in Management Accounting, Bobby has always believed in giving back and receiving personal growth through the growth of others. Real Estate has provided the perfect platform for both. Bobby is a Licensed Residential Builder, now dedicated full-time and coming full circle to his lifelong passion. Currently, he is working to achieve measured Company growth through scaling up to Mix-Use and Multi-Unit Projects. Bobby’s overall goal is to support sustainable neighborhood stabilization through strategic development.



**Laneetra Miller**

Laneetra’s passion in life is caring for others, especially those who are often overlooked in society. Laneetra attended Concordia University in Ann Arbor, MI, and received her bachelor’s degree in psychology. Shortly after, Laneetra received her master’s degree from

Ashland Theological seminary in counseling where she learned to merge her faith with her passion. In 2019, Laneetra successfully flipped her first property and saw how much joy it brought her and the purchaser of the home. A new passion was born along with the desire to foster homeownership by developing a rent-to-own model that would involve credit building, counseling, and wealth management. She knows how a stable home is not only foundational for mental health but is also foundational to overall Wealth Management. Laneetra is a licensed mortgage loan originator who continues to pursue her passion for Real Estate by renovating properties. She has also partnered with her husband, a Certified Financial Planner, to provide operational support and help clients holistically through wealth management and real estate investing.



**William Marquez**

Wil Marquez uses innovative design principles to probe new ideas in architecture, design, and development. His 20-year tenure goes hand in hand with his enthusiasm about new ways professionals contribute to meaningful and stimulating environments for a just city. He holds a Master’s degree

in architecture from the University of Michigan and an undergraduate degree in architecture from the University of Minnesota. His studio w/Purpose has led and collaborated on a variety of developments, neighborhood plans, urban strategies, and design/build projects since 2010. His familiarity with AEC industries has enabled him to recognize a project’s complexity while leveraging strategic alliances with agencies, designers, fabricators, contractors, and artists. He adds value to a project by connecting developments to parallel initiatives and funding that enhances the status and capacity of development. He currently operates a successful Mid-Century themed Airbnb and is currently renovating a home in Boston Edison. Wil’s book of deeds includes an appointment on the Public Arts for Neighborhood Fund (PANF) and on the Central United Methodist Church Housing Development advisory committee.



**Ignacio Moreno**

Ignacio is passionate about the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings. As a residential developer, Ignacio has restored numerous homes and has provided safe housing to local families in the Pingree Park and Gratiot Woods Neighborhood in Detroit’s Eastside.

His diverse background includes commercial and residential design and construction, including retail and restaurant spaces. He combines complex problem solving with a creative mind in his role as a project designer at Recovery Detroit. Ignacio holds double Associate Degrees in Construction and Residential Design and Drafting, a Bachelor’s in Housing Studies from Oregon State University, and a Master’s of Architecture from the University of Oregon. In addition to this work, he has converted abandoned landbank lots into green spaces to beautify the neighborhood and hosts seasonal events for kids in his community such as winter outdoor hockey, summer Slow Rolls, and Halloween Movie Nights in Pingree Park.

**Barima Opong-Owusu**

Barima is a clinical pharmacist working in Medical Affairs for a pharmaceutical company for his day job. He is a dual graduate from the University of Michigan. He is active as a Real Estate Investor with experience in single-family and multifamily rehabs and rentals while he works to grow

his personal portfolio. He is president of BlackStar Properties which is focused on multifamily and mixed-use acquisition and development. He is passionate about creating quality affordable multifamily rehabs to preserve some of the history and culture of the buildings as well as providing housing to Detroiters. I would love to create development partnerships that help bring some of the vacant apartment buildings and properties back to life while creating value for investors and residents.

**Melinda Rushing**

Melinda recently began her development journey, purchasing her first house in Sunnyside, a predominantly black community, in Houston Texas. Melinda worked with the builder to tailor the layout and design the interior of the newly constructed home, then converted

it into a rental property. She currently oversees the management of her Houston rental property and is seeking to expand her real estate portfolio in Houston and Dallas. After relocating to work at the University of Michigan, Melinda embarked on a renovation project on the west side of Detroit. She completed this project in March of 2022 and is currently looking to collaborate with other developers to restore properties around Detroit. Melinda's goal is to complete residential and commercial real estate projects in multiple cities. Her mission is to design health-promoting living spaces that encourage a healthy lifestyle. After completing the EDI program, Melinda feels she has the foundational skills needed to pursue her real estate development goals.

**Tanya Stephens**

Detroit, designer, preservationist, and Licensed Real Estate Professional, Tanya is passionate about the preservation of divested historic landscapes and communities, cultural heritage, and Detroit's built environment. She is Executive Director and Founder of Detroit Vacant Land CDC,

a non-profit community development organization dedicated to beautifying vacant land through creative land re-use and transforming Detroit's vacant land into community assets. Tanya is currently working on a corridor development project and the development of a cultural village located in the renowned Heidelberg Project Arts District, a 38-year-old public art environment and innovative arts-based development in Historic McDougall Hunt Neighborhood on Detroit's Eastside. The project includes the rehabilitation and development of residential, commercial, and vacant land on a 4-block corridor, utilizing arts, culture, and design as catalysts for revitalization of the distressed historic neighborhood.

**Daniel Washington**

Daniel A. Washington, a lifelong Detroit, is a leader, creative, and a doer with a passion for real estate and community development. The Wayne State University graduate has extensive experience with single-family, full gut rehabs, having managed more than five projects since

2019. In 2017, he founded NW Goldberg Cares - a community development organization. In his role as executive director, he has spearheaded the creation of five public green spaces and is leading the renovation of a 13,000 sq ft. commercial building. Previously, Daniel co-founded a food start-up that was the first to put edible cookie dough in entertainment venues across Southeast Michigan. He is inspired by creating relatable brands, impactful programs and meaningful experiences. The 2021 Crain's 20 in their 20s awardee has more than five years of experience in public space creation, entrepreneurship, fundraising and transformative, intentional community-centric development.



### **Felishia Williams**

Felishia's vision is to create change in her community and beyond, with a focus on providing affordable housing for Detroiters. After graduating from Kentucky State University with a BA in Business Administration, she knew exactly how she would assist her community. Born and raised on the Eastside of Detroit, her passion for the city revitalization began with a purchase of a two-family unit from HUD in 2009. This purchase was the beginning of a mission; to bring back growth and empowerment through housing, neighborhood by neighborhood. Felishia was ready and purpose-driven. She purchased, rebuilt, and revived many single and multi-family homes throughout the city; creating an opportunity for families to have a fresh start and a better quality of life. Felisha's current goal is to use her knowledge and experience as a real estate investor and property manager to become a multifamily developer, focusing on rebuilding the city's Eastside. She is currently working on a block-level development project that includes 15 new construction multifamily homes, a pocket park, and retail space for neighborhood residents.



### **James Williams**

Experienced Leader that embodies an entrepreneurial spirit and strives to maximize business potential through. The required skills, knowledge, and ability for developing and executing corporate strategy are demonstrated through a record of exemplary financial results. In addition, his relentless desire for continuous improvements has led to standardized practices, reporting, and visibility in every phase of business development, from concept, through planning and execution, to optimization and replication across five continents. James has more than 20 years of experience in Leadership, Sales Operation, Global Account Management, and Business Development. James is currently Vice President of Global Key Accounts and Automotive Vertical Leader - Americas at CEVA Logistics focusing on bringing innovative supply chain solutions to global automotive clients. Prior to CEVA and DSV/UTI James was a Partner of Walker SCM.



For more information about the Equitable Development Initiative in Detroit, please contact:

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