



## Lowell Plan Public Matters® 2024 Participant Bios



Amy Allen is the Program Coordinator of the Rist Institute for Sustainability and Energy at UMass Lowell. She's been with the University for seven years. The Rist Institute serves as the university's center for hands-on research on sustainability, climate change and renewable energy with a goal to create blueprints for human scale sustainability in communities throughout our region and across the world. Amy is also a double alum of UMass Lowell, with an undergraduate degree in Information Technology and a master's degree in business administration.



**Robert Boley** is the Vice President of Business Services at Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union. In his current role, he leads the Credit Union's business department team in developing new business deposit relationships. He also works directly with the VP of Commercial Lending, to fulfil lending needs and supporting our business member's growth initiatives to become a successful part of the community. Robert has been in banking for the past 11 years, previously working in Salem Five Bank and Citizens Bank. Robert is involved with several organizations as either a board member or volunteer including, the Westford Rotary, the Bridge Club of Greater Lowell, Mill City Grows, the Entrepreneurship Center at CTI, the Lawrence Boys and Girls Club, and MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative in Lowell's Acre neighborhood. Robert was born and raised in Lowell. He now lives in Lawrence where he's resided for more than six years. He likes to spend time playing football, playing golf and relaxing with his wife and two kids. He has a Masters of Business Administration (M.B.A) from Fitchburg State University.



**Aubrey Brown** worked at Carlsbad Caverns National Park in New Mexico for 5.5 years prior to moving here this past January to work at Lowell National Historical Park. As an interpretive ranger, she provides tours and other types of programming to share the stories of the city's past and present. Aubrey is in charge of the park's Lowell Talks series to explore some of the complexities of Lowell's past and present. She has a double bachelor's degree in archaeology and anthropology from The College of Wooster, and a Master's degree in history from Youngstown State University, with a focus in public history and historic preservation. Aubrey became a park ranger because it's more fun and rewarding to help others make connections with the history of the natural and cultural world around them. She served as a board member for the Southeastern

New Mexico Historical Society and the Carlsbad Community Theater and is looking forward to becoming more involved within my new community. I enjoy caving, hiking, cross-stitching, and am writing a historical thriller novel that takes place in 1830s-1840s Lowell involving a mill girl serial killer. She enjoys anywhere that has historic architecture, unique stories, and good food.



**Sokhom Chun** currently works as a Commercial Lending Officer at Enterprise Bank. She's been with the bank for more than 21 years, having also served as a Lending Assistant and Portfolio Manager. Sokhom is a former board member of the Lowell Community Health Center and currently serves on the Board for the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell. She emigrated to the United States from Cambodia and grew up in the city of Lowell. Sokhom has a blended family with four children and a Pitbull, Bronx. In her free time she enjoys spending time with family. Sokhom currently lives in Haverhill.



**Maria Garay Dodd** is the Vice President and Branch Manager of the Lowell Five Bank Downtown Lowell Office. She is responsible for the overall management of the office, including customer service, operations/compliance management, human resources management and business development within the Lowell market. Maria proudly serves as a board member of The Center for Hope and Healing, Inc., and as a member of Lowell First Church of the Nazarene, she volunteers her time as a greeter and recording secretary. Maria lives in Lowell and spends her free time with her husband Howard and her daughter Krystal. She is also the proud stepmom to Devon, Ashanti, Dahlia, and Jordan. Maria loves visiting her native island of Puerto Rico yearly. Maria attended Middlesex Community College where she obtained an associate degree in liberal studies with a certificate in travel services. During her career with Lowell Five, she has attended the Center for Financial Training and has received diplomas in Advanced Financial Services, General Financial Services, and Consumer Lending.



**Erin Duffey** is the Program Assistant in the Office of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (CASE) at the City of Lowell. Prior to joining the City, she worked as a freelance stage manager for opera and theatre, as well as a COVID Safety Coordinator at Bard Summerscape. Erin holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Production- Stage Management from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Her background in events made the CASE office a natural next step. As a part of her position, Erin is also the administrator for the Lowell Cultural Council, an agent of Mass Cultural Council. In her spare time, Erin works at SUTRA Studio in Mill No.5. She lives in Haverhill with her husband Paul and two cats,

Ciabatta and Prince Spaghetti.



**Caroline Duong** was born and raised in Kenya where she grew up to be a news anchor and international news reporter for one of the top TV stations. In 2001 she immigrated to the United States to further her studies and pursue better opportunities. Caroline has worked as a voice actor, radio show producer and host, as well as in HR and Customer Service in the healthcare space. She is currently a realtor in the Greater Lowell area, helping people, especially first time homebuyers find a home. Caroline is also the Board Chair at the Lowell Community Health Center. She is a singer and songwriter, plays piano and enjoys the outdoors. Caroline is a wife and mother and resides in Lowell with her family.



**Thomas Emery** is the Director of Real Estate at Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA). He first started at CBA as a UML student, interning with both CBA Programs and then moved over to the Real Estate department. He was hired in 2015 and spent 7 years as Real Estate Project Manager, overseeing projects like the Gerson Building in Haverhill. Thomas takes great pride and satisfaction knowing his work provides affordable housing and opportunities to families and individuals in the Merrimack Valley. He graduated from UMass Lowell with a BA in Sociology and an MA in Community Development, Policy, and Practice from the University of New Hampshire.



**Belinda Juran** grew up in a working-class family in Queens, NY. A scholarship allowed her to attend the University of Scranton, earning a BS in Math. Belinda then moved to Massachusetts to work in the high-tech industry, initially as a software engineer, then a manager and consultant. While working full-time, she earned an MBA from Boston University. The opportunity to attend Harvard Law School led to the law firm of WilmerHale in Boston, where she advised biotech companies on contracts protecting their intellectual property, retiring from the partnership in 2019. Belinda was a 2020-2021 fellow in Harvard's Advanced Leadership Initiative, a leadership program for professionals seeking to make a social impact in the next phase of their lives, and she serves on the ALI Social Impact Review. Moving to Lowell in 2007 made her a proud *Lovellian* who thrives on

promoting connections to help weave a stronger and even more vibrant fabric of community. Belinda currently serves on the boards of directors of the International Institute of New England and the Pollard Memorial Library Foundation, the advisory boards of UMass Lowell's School of Education and Harvard Kennedy School's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, and the working boards of the Lowell City of Learning project and the Lowell Early Childhood Council.



**Farrorza Lim**, is a graduate of Middlesex Community College with an Associate degree in Political Science and Global Studies. He later earned a Bachelor's in Liberal Studies with a concentration in History and Political Studies from UMass Lowell. Returning to Middlesex as a Success Scholars Coach, he passionately guides students, particularly from diverse backgrounds such as Asian American, Black, African American, Latinx, and LGBTQ+ communities, ensuring they have the support needed to succeed academically, financially, and personally. Farrorza moved to Lowell in 2017, drawn to the city's diversity and communal atmosphere. During his free time, he enjoys exploring Boston via the commuter rail with friends, relishing the Lowell's culinary scene, embodying a commitment to both personal growth and community engagement.



**Christine McCarron** is the Managing Broker at Beehive Brokerage and Queen Bee of Beehive Coworking Community. She also coaches women in real estate investing and helps them to discover their bliss. In both jobs her responsibility is to create and nurture a community of diverse people for the benefit of all, to educate and inform. Christine is active in the Tyngsboro/Dunstable Rotary, BetterInvesting, and Appalachian Mountain Club. Christine has a BA in Business Management from Northeastern University. She lives in Tyngsboro and loves to dance, anything outdoors and

related to the arts. She also enjoys hanging out with friends and family, reading, watching movies, traveling and having new experiences.





**Carley Monell** has more than 20 years of experience in fundraising, marketing, and communications, and currently serves as Director of Development at Lowell Community Health Center. Earlier in her career, she worked primarily in the private sector, but found her calling helping non-profits hone their messaging to elevate brand and fundraising efforts. Over many years working with clients in Lowell, she developed a deep appreciation for the unique energy and culture of the City. After completing an MBA in Non-Profit Management at Suffolk University in 2018, she joined the Advancement Team at Lowell CHC. During her time at the Health Center, she has led initiatives focused on storytelling that captures and advances the organization's mission of health justice. In addition, Carley is a passionate advocate for the arts and served for many years as the Chair of the Cultural Council in Amesbury, where she lives with her husband and two daughters. Carley also holds a Bachelor's

Degree in Communications from Northeastern University. When not at her desk, or shuttling her children to activities, Carley is an avid consumer of podcasts and books, with a particular fondness for mysteries and memoirs. She also spends as much time as possible outdoors, jogging, hiking, or kayaking.



**Kear Ou** is a Retail Operations Coordinator at Metro Credit Union, where she oversees process and procedures and writes and revises Standard Operating Procedures as needed. Kear also taught a banking elective at Peabody High School and led a successful team to compete in the Banking Bowl at the Federal Reserve. Kear is a graduate from NSCC with a degree in Science. She grew up in the Northshore and moved to Lowell in 2019. She quickly fell in love with the city and wanted to be a part of its growth and development. In a short period, Kear was recognized and nominated for secretary at her Neighborhood Action Plan Group and joined the Lowell Litter Krewe and the Greater Lowell Technical High School as a board member. Kear is inspired daily by her husband, 3 sons, and furbaby.



**Jes O'Hearn** Jessica O'Hearn is the Director of Mosaic Lowell, the arts, culture and creative economy plan for the city of Lowell. Mosaic Lowell brings together people, neighborhoods, businesses, and organizations from across the city to work in partnership to amplify the power and reach of the city's creatives, its cultural offerings, and the creative economy that produces them. Prior to this appointment, Jessica held the position of Executive Director of the Brookline Arts Center, a visual arts center that serves the greater Boston community

and presents exhibits featuring local and regionally known artists, with an emphasis on work by underrepresented and emerging artists. Before joining the BAC, Jessica served as Artistic Director and Curator at the Juliet Art Museum in Charleston, WV.

Born and raised in NJ, her education focused on printmaking, arts education and administration. She earned her BFA at Lesley University in 2006 and her MFA at The Massachusetts College of Art and

Design in 2011. In 2007, she completed the printer training program at the Tamarind Institute of Lithography in Albuquerque, NM and then worked as Studio Assistant and Registrar to the Michael Mazur Estate in Cambridge, MA. Following graduate school, Jessica worked as Printmaking Lab Technician and Foundations Lecturer at The Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. She later became a Production Printer and Project Manager at The University of Notre Dame's Segura Arts Studio in South Bend, IN where she curated the nationally touring retrospective exhibition, *Images of Social Justice: From the Segura Arts Studio*. Jessica lives in Lowell with her husband, Jack, and two daughters.



**Nadia Peattie**, has worked at the Lowell National Historical Park for over a year and was promoted to Park Ranger earlier this summer. In this capacity she gives tours and programs to visitors and community members in the summer, staffs multiple sites, and loves the chance to work during Lowell Folk Fest. She's especially loves helping to lead the art program and kids'. Having been in Lowell for only a short time she is for more opportunities to learn about the community and find ways to engage. Nadia grew up in Florida. She received her bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Conservation at the University of Florida. She currently lives in Fitchburg, MA. She has numerous hobbies and interests including writing, crafting of all sorts, sewing, visiting cemeteries and historic sites. I never have enough time!

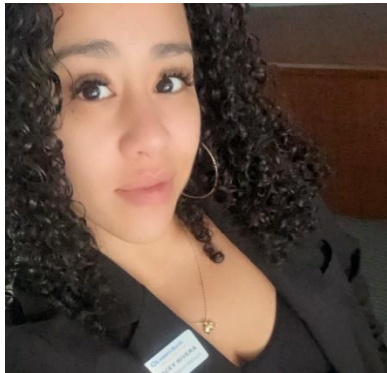


**Jennifer Phengdara** is a Program Associate and Homebuyer Counselor at the Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership in Lowell. With her professional financial background in residential mortgage lending, she has worked for both local community banks and national mortgage companies, helping a diverse range of homebuyers purchase their first homes. Jennifer's background in Affordable Housing has made her knowledgeable about program options for various types of buyers, and she has a strong interest in first-generation homeownership. Apart from her efforts in first-generation services in housing, Jennifer is also the proud owner of Envoy Travels, a travel agency specializing in international flights to Southeast Asia. Jennifer is also a volunteer marketing coordinator for the Lao

Women's Association of Lowell, which provides support for Laotian families in the community. When she is not working, Jennifer enjoys all things sports, travel, and is a self-proclaimed foodie. Jennifer is an alumna of Simmons College and completed her secondary education locally at Lowell Catholic High School. As an active member of her community, she draws inspiration from her role as a mother to her 4-year-old son, Lawson. He reminds her to lead by example, be dynamic, and strive for positive change.



**Dylan Ricker** is the Associate Planner for the City of Lowell. As the Associate Planner, he staffs the City's Land Use Boards including, the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, and Community Preservation Committee. He also assists homeowners, developers, and businesses navigating the City's zoning code and permitting process. Prior to working for the City he worked with Community Teamwork, Inc., and the District Office of Congresswoman Niki Tsongas. He graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science, and completed his Master's Degree in Public Policy from Northeastern University. He grew up in Pepperell, and currently resides in Nashua. In his free time he enjoys golfing, fishing, and skiing.



**Stacey Rivera** is the Assistant Branch Manager with Eastern Bank in downtown Lowell. She has lived in Lowell for 9 years and is excited to explore all that Lowell has to offer. She grew up in East Freetown, MA and graduated from Apponequet Regional High School in 2005. She moved to Florida shortly after graduating from high school and lived there for almost 10 years before returning to Massachusetts. Stacey became a plant parent during the pandemic and believes the more plants, the better! She enjoys trying foods from different cultures, my plants, elephants and staring at the moon!



**David Wanderi** is a filmmaker and photographer with a primary focus on storytelling and fashion photography. His portfolio showcases his skills and expertise in capturing the perfect shot, while his unique style captures the beauty of each moment. As a filmmaker, David has written and directed short films, exploring the power of visual storytelling. His work as a business owner has allowed him to develop marketing, sales, and customer service skills, and has given him a deeper understanding of the importance of building strong relationships with clients. With a degree in English and a background in writing, David brings a unique perspective to all of his creative endeavors. His experience in photography, filmmaking, business, and writing makes him a versatile and valuable asset to any creative project. David is always looking for new opportunities to collaborate and create, and is excited to connect with other professionals in the city of Lowell.