PAT BROWN INSTITUTE



HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT: A CALL TO ACTION



CIVIC SERIES

PANELIST BIOS

FALL 2024



Shantay Armstrong, MPA (**she/hers**) is dedicated to compassion, wealth-building and liberation. She believes in the possibility of all people to achieve their full power in joy and light. Shantay has over 20 years of working in direct service in BIPOC communities as a foster care caseworker, teacher therapist for traumatized children, and parent coach. Most recently, she has worked in nonprofit management leading economic mobility work for United Ways of California. She is currently the lead of Kidsave's EMBRACE Project, an initiative working to increase wellness for Black youth in foster care, decrease barriers for Black families, educate all families wanting to mentor and adopt Black youth, and impact policy implications from 2025 and beyond. Shantay enjoys rollerblading, meditating and going to the beach with her two boys.

embrace.kidsave.org



MODERATOR

Sarah Dusseault is a policy-maker and advocate whose innovative approach to addressing local issues has helped bring results to the Los Angeles region over the last two decades. Sarah recently served as Co-Chair on the LA County Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness and is working to implement governance and system reform to create accountability. In the past, she served as Vice Chair and Chair of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Commission, the joint city-county agency that coordinates housing and services for homeless individuals and families in Los Angeles County. As Commission Chair from 2019 to 2020, Sarah helped lead COVID-relief efforts such as the implementation of Project Roomkey, providing emergency housing to more than 8,000 individuals in Los Angeles County. Sarah currently works as Co-Founder and Lead on LA4LA, a new public private partnership with Mayor Bass to design and unlock new financial tools for immediate housing options. She also works with the Angeleno Project to research and advocate for systems change to support equity in key policy areas.

LA4LA.org



Sage Johnson, a native of Southern California, was born and raised in Los Angeles. Her work focuses on addressing homelessness for Transitional-Aged Youth in Los Angeles County, particularly Black and Queer young individuals involved in the homeless services response system. With nine years of advocacy experience at local, statewide, and national levels, Sage has been dedicated to homelessness and housing rights in Los Angeles County. Having experienced housing instability from her teenage years into early adulthood, Sage navigated both the young adult homeless services system and the adult homeless services system while working to secure housing assistance for herself and her mother. This experience immersed her in a broken system and sparked her advocacy journey. Since then, she has committed herself to advocating for others and pushing for institutional and structural change. Sage has engaged with officials such as former Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti to emphasize the need for competency and urgency in allocating services and funding for Transitional-Aged Youth services within Los Angeles County. She firmly believes that involving people with lived experiences of homelessness in the creation and implementation of policies and practices is key to ending homelessness. These perspectives and experiences are essential for creating meaningful long-term social change leading to future prosperity. In her free time, Sage enjoys expressing her creativity through stand-up comedy, attending concerts, and writing.



Alex Visotzky is the Senior California Policy Fellow for the National Alliance to End Homelessness, where he works to ground California's response to homelessness in best practices and evidenced-based solutions. Prior to working for the Alliance, Alex worked for five years in local government, where he served most recently as the Director of Government Affairs for the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the lead administrative entity for the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (LA CoC). There, he directed LAHSA's legislative, policy, and community engagement work. Prior to joining LAHSA, Alex worked for Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles County, where he advocated for local and state policies to advance equitable land use, affordable housing, and affordable homeownership. He serves on the Board of LA Forward, a non-profit fighting for policies to make LA County a fair, flourishing place for everyone and is a member of the California Interagency Council on Homelessness' Advisory Committee.

endhomelessness.org