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I have worked in the CDFI industry for over 9 years at the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund in Concord, NH. The Community Loan Fund is one of the first certified CDFIs in the country and was instrumental in developing the CDFI movement. I currently serve as Executive Vice President of Strategic Partnerships and Philanthropy and have also been responsible for Public Policy and Marketing and Communications.

Prior to joining the Community Loan Fund, I was in banking for 30 years, with half in executive roles in mortgage lending and the rest as an executive in community relations, CRA and public affairs.

In addition, I have over 24 years of experience serving on various boards, from universities to community health centers, to nonprofit housing organizations. At Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) I served on the board of trustees for 8 years, 4 of those as board chair during which I led a successful chancellor search. As board chair of a nonprofit housing organization (NeighborWorks affiliate), I was able to lead a successful merger with another nonprofit housing organization in Nashua, NH.

Experience in leadership transitions

As a member of the OFN board I will bring my experience of both leading change and implementing change. My years in banking afforded me the opportunity to learn how to transition to many types of leadership styles within short periods of time, and how to ensure that each change in leadership had a smooth landing both internally and externally. As board chair at WSSU, I also chaired the search committee for the new chancellor. The committee was large and included all stakeholders, often with differing opinions. Our decision produced one of the most prestigious chancellors in the University System of North Carolina. Today WSSU is one of the top Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) in the country.

Most recently the Community Loan Fund's founding President retired after 37 years with the organization. In April 2021, our new President and CEO joined our staff. I worked with the board and our senior management team to ensure that his onboarding was successful both internally and externally. A year later, our organization exceeded all our key goals and indicators and is in its strongest position in its history.

If elected to the OFN board, I would apply my many years of experience with leadership transitions to OFN's search for a new leader.

America's affordable housing crisis

As we all know, there is an affordable housing crisis across our country. One of the key reasons is private equity firms buying homes and reaping exorbitant profits. This is occurring in all types of housing—rental and homeownership, site-built and manufactured (mobile) homes.

Real estate investors bought a record 18.4 percent of the homes that were sold in the United States in the fourth quarter of 2021, up from 12.6 percent a year earlier, according to the realty company Redfin. Last year, investors bought nearly one in seven homes sold in America's top metropolitan areas, the most in at least two decades, also according to Redfin.

Neighborhoods where a majority of residents are Black have been heavily targeted, according to a Washington Post article. Last year, 30 percent of home sales in majority Black neighborhoods were to investors, compared with 12 percent in other zip codes, the Post's analysis shows.

On a more up-close and personal level is what we at the Community Loan Fund and ROC USA are experiencing with manufactured homes. As income inequality has risen, sophisticated investors have increasingly turned to mobile-home parks as a lucrative market. They see the parks as reliable sources of passive income—assets that generate steady returns and require little effort to maintain. Some of these firms are eligible for subsidized loans through government entities Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Across the country, private equity firms are buying manufactured-home communities from mom-and-pop owners, then raising rents and fees. In most places, this has caused rents for the land under residents' homes to become unaffordable, especially for those on fixed incomes or with low incomes.

Manufactured housing is no longer about mobility (trailers that can be carted from place to place) but about affordability. These homes look pretty much like your typical ranch house but, depending on where you live, they cost half the price. Manufactured homes shelter 22 million Americans.

This deeply disturbs me and should disturb every OFN member, as it is happening in all of our states, cities, towns, and communities. It is time for us to get engaged in the fight against the continued loss of affordable housing. It is time to add our voice and our energy to help the defenseless, those who deserve to own a home that is affordable but are limited by their incomes.

If elected to the OFN board, I will be that energy and voice to hopefully ignite us as members to participate in this fight to preserve affordable housing.