



**URBAN LAW CENTER** *presents*  
**Women In Urban Law Leadership Initiative**

April 16, 2019 | Room 7-119

About the Symposium

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The Women in Urban Law Leadership Initiative (WIULLI) of the Urban Law Center supports networking and career development for women practicing urban law and law students interested in pursuing urban law.

Agenda

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8:45 - 9 a.m.

**Check in**

9 - 9:10 a.m.

**Welcome Remarks**

**Geeta Tewari**, Associate Director; Urban Law Fellow, Urban Law Center

9:10 - 10 a.m.

**CLE Panel Discussion on Gender Equity in Urban Law** (1.0 diversity, inclusion and elimination of bias credit)

*Featuring*

**Dana Sussman**, Deputy Commissioner, Intergovernmental Affairs and Policy, NYC Commission on Human Rights; and **Valerie White**, Executive VP and Director of the Division of Minority and Women's Business Development, Empire State Development Corporation '96

*Moderated by*

**Gowri Krishna**, Associate Professor of Law, New York Law School '06

10 - 10:30 a.m.

**Networking Breakfast**

## Speakers

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### **Gowri Krishna**

#### **Associate Professor of Law, New York Law School**

Gowri Krishna is an experienced clinical educator with a strong focus on economic, racial, and social justice. She began her career as an Equal Justice Works Fellow at the Urban Justice Center, where she led a project that provided legal services to low-wage immigrant worker groups. After her fellowship, Professor Krishna taught community economic development clinics at Fordham School of Law, the University of Michigan Law School, and Roger Williams University School of Law. In 2015, she returned to the Urban Justice Center to lead the expansion of its Community Development Project, which represents worker cooperatives and nonprofit groups throughout New York City on a broad range of corporate matters, including structuring, governance, tax, and employment issues. Throughout her career, Professor Krishna has maintained a steady focus on confronting the country's widening wealth gap and addressing threats to immigrants' rights, workers' rights, and public services. She has promoted innovative approaches to community-building that draw on the strengths of traditionally underrepresented and under-served groups, and she has advocated for workers' rights to dignified jobs free of abuse and exploitation. She is an expert on immigrant-owned worker cooperatives and has presented on her work at the American Association of Law Schools Annual Meeting and the American Bar Association (ABA) Forum on Affordable Housing and Community Development Law Annual Meeting. Professor Krishna also chaired the Community Economic Development Committee of the ABA's Business Law Section and regularly organizes meetings of New York City community economic development attorneys. In addition, she has published scholarship on worker cooperatives and movement lawyering. Through the Nonprofit and Small Business Clinic, Professor Krishna leads NYLS students in counseling New York City nonprofit and community-based organizations, worker cooperatives, social ventures, and neighborhood-based entrepreneurs that could not otherwise afford legal services on matters such as corporate formation, governance, tax and real estate issues, and contracts. Professor Krishna earned her B.A. in Social Thought and Analysis and Political Science from Washington University of St. Louis and her J.D. from Fordham University School of Law, where she was highly active in public service and human rights groups.

### **Dana Sussman**

#### **Deputy Commissioner for Intergovernmental Affairs and Policy, NYC Commission on Human Rights**

Dana Sussman is Deputy Commissioner for Intergovernmental Affairs and Policy at the NYC Commission on Human Rights, where she coordinates the Commission's policy, regulatory, and legislative work and oversees the Commission's gender justice initiatives. Prior to joining the Commission in March 2015, Dana was a Senior Staff Attorney in the Anti-Trafficking Program at Safe Horizon, where she represented victims of trafficking in civil litigation, criminal justice advocacy, and immigration relief. Dana was formerly an Associate at Outten & Golden LLP representing employees in wage and hour cases and gender, pregnancy, and LGBTQ discrimination matters in negotiations, administrative proceedings, and litigation. After graduating from Northeastern University School of Law, Dana clerked for Magistrate Judge Orenstein in the Eastern District of New York and served as a Legal Fellow at the Center for Reproductive Rights. Dana holds a B.A. and MPH from Tufts University.

### **Valerie D. White**

#### **Vice President, Executive Vice President & Executive Director Division of Minority and Women's Business Development**

Valerie White is the Executive Vice President at the Empire State Development Corporation and serves as the Executive Director of the Division of Minority and Women's Business Development; which is charged with promoting equality of economic opportunities for MWBEs throughout New York State. In her role, Valerie oversees the certification program for minority and women owned business enterprises (MWBEs) including the methodology for eligibility analysis, the application review process, and the maintenance of the MWBE certified business repository. Valerie also leads the team in developing and executing on strategies for the business development of MWBEs through education and outreach to state agencies, MWBEs, and private sector firms. Valerie joined ESD from the Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation, where she served as Vice President, External Affairs. In that role, she led the department in raising the global, national, and local visibility of the 'Yard' through the development and execution of corporate public affairs strategies; which included building and growing strategic partnerships with government representatives, community groups, and corporate sponsors. Valerie also led the Navy Yard's efforts to acquire funding from government, philanthropic, and socially responsible investment sources. Prior to her role at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Valerie was managing director and lead analytical manager of the public finance housing and municipal structured securities business at Standard & Poor's ratings, where she led a team of analysts, directing the development and implementation of analytical methodologies and capital risk assessments. During her time at Standard & Poor's, Valerie authored nearly 60 commentary papers on public finance, affordable housing, and structured finance market trends and issues, and delivered speeches at international conferences focused on public finance and housing including the 7th Annual Australian National Affordable Housing Conference, the Tri-Country Housing Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, the 5th Global Housing Finance Conference at The World Bank, and the first International Social Housing Summit in Den Haag, Netherlands. Valerie's career began in public service at the City of New York's Department of Personnel where she helped transform agency operations as Deputy Director, Management Planning and Analysis. In her next role as HOPE VI Director in the Asset Management and Private Market Operations department at the New York City Housing Authority, Valerie led a series of progressively challenging initiatives, including the highly-visible implementation of three urban revitalization projects. Valerie's active community service roles include serving as on board of trustees for the Brooklyn Arts Council and a board member of the BRIC Media Arts; as well as an executive committee member for the United Way Worldwide's Women United council. Valerie holds both a bachelor's degree in Communications and a law degree from Fordham University, and master's degree and Certificate in Organization Development from The New School. She lives in Brooklyn.

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#### **CLE CREDIT**

Credit has been approved in accordance with the requirements of the New York State CLE Board for a maximum of 1.0 non-transitional (1.0 diversity, inclusion & elimination of bias) credit

**CLE course materials are available at: [law.fordham.edu/clematerials](http://law.fordham.edu/clematerials)**