



Award Selection Committee 2021



Committee Leader: Hilesh Patel
**Leadership Investment Program Officer,
Field Foundation of Illinois, Field Leader '17**

As the Leadership Investment Program Officer, Hilesh is dedicated to working with Chicago's aspiring leaders and their organizations. Hilesh was previously the Deputy Director of Hyde Park Art Center, overseeing Public Programs, Marketing & Communication, Finance and Operations and Strategic Planning. Hilesh has more than 15 years' experience in Chicago communities, previously managing CPS and community partnerships at CAPE (Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education) and working as a high school teacher. A former Field Leader awardee, Hilesh graduated from University of Chicago's Civic Leadership Academy in June 2018.



Committee Leader: Geoffrey Banks
**Senior Program Officer, Chicago Commitment,
[John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#)**

Geoffrey works with the Chicago Commitment team on all aspects of the strategy's grantmaking in Chicago. A Chicago native, Geoffrey previously served as Senior Program Officer at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. He was responsible for the Foundation's grantmaking program in Investigative Journalism, and he co-managed the MacArthur Funds for Arts and Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation. During his time at the Driehaus Foundation, Geoffrey served on the Steering Committee for the Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development and as co-chair of Chicago African Americans in Philanthropy (CAAIP).



Dorothy I. Burge
Artist, Community Activist and Educator

Dorothy I. Burge is a fabric artist, community activist and educator who is inspired by both historic and current social justice issues. She is an African-American woman and mother who was born, raised and continues to live on Chicago's southside. She is a board member of the [Women of Color Quilters Network](#); founding member of the [Chicago Torture Justice Memorials](#) and Blacks Against Police Torture.



Juliet De Jesus Alejandre
Executive Director, [Logan Square Neighborhood Association](#)

As Executive Director of Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Juliet De Jesus Alejandre's vision of the organization as a modern-day Palenque/Quilombo drives her notion of organizing as a five-hundred-year tradition whose ultimate goal is personal, collective, and systemic transformation. She is mama to 3 boys and grew up in Chicago's Latin@x west side, up and down Grand Ave.



Elijah McKinnon
**Co-Founder, [Reunion Chicago](#) Co-Founder and Executive
Director, [OTV](#)**

Elijah McKinnon is the co-founder of Reunion Chicago, an exhibition space and project incubator prioritized for queer, women-identified and people of color in creative roles; is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of OTV - Open Television, a web TV platform for queer, trans and artists of color. As an award-winning strategist, creative director, entrepreneur, artist and advocate, Elijah is on a mission to make "queer" an actionable verb in community, media and policy spaces.



Tiffany Walden
Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief, [TRiiBE](#)

As co-founder and editor-in-chief of The TRiiBE, Tiffany Walden has impressively built a news organization that has become a vital piece of Chicago's media landscape and a voice for black Chicago. As an on-the-ground reporter, editor, media visionary and fierce advocate for systemic change, she uses resources and access to advocate for others while also creating a pathway for them to gain agency.



Sharlyn Grace
**Founding Member and Former Executive Director,
[Chicago Community Bond Fund](#)**

Sharlyn Grace is a lifelong organizer who went to law school with the goal of using her legal skills, credentials, and access in support of grassroots movements for social change. She is a founding member and the former Executive Director of Chicago Community Bond Fund (CCBF) and was previously the senior criminal justice policy analyst at Chicago Appleseed, managed a school-based restorative justice program in [Back of the Yards](#), and coordinated the Juvenile Expungement Help Desk at the Cook County Juvenile Center.