

2026  
shape   
OF THE region™  
CONFERENCE

## Innovation and Leadership for Northern Virginia

Welcome to the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia's Shape of the Region Conference, where business leaders, innovators, and changemakers come together to explore bold ideas and practical solutions that will define our region's future.

This year's conference centers on the interconnected systems that define community well-being—from health, housing, and transportation to education, arts, philanthropy, and economic opportunity—and how collaboration across sectors can strengthen resilience and drive shared progress.

TUESDAY, MARCH 24  
7:30 - 11:30 AM

VALO PARK AUDITORIUM,  
TYSONS CORNER

**8:30**  
**Introduction**

**Harry Klaff**

Principal, President, U.S., Avison Young,  
Board Chair, Community Foundation for  
Northern Virginia



**8:35**  
**Welcome**

**Drew Wilder**

NBC4 Northern Virginia Reporter



**8:45**  
**Keynote  
Presentation**

**Paul Misener**

Founder and Principal, Misener Innovation  
Former 23-year Amazon Global Vice  
President and Northern Virginia native



9:15  
Lightning  
Talks



Dr. Lisa Sturtevant  
housing

Chief Economist



Dr. Garima Sharma  
healthcare

Director of Preventive Cardiology  
and Women's Cardiovascular Health



Elizabeth Kersey  
transportation

Vice President of Government  
and Corporate Affairs



10:15  
Break

## *Coffee & Stretch*

(15 minutes)



# PROGRAM AGENDA

10:30  
Lightning  
Talks

10:50  
Q&A



Senior Director of  
Employer Alignment

**strada**



Associate Artistic Director

**SIGNATURE  
THEATRE**

**11:30**  
**Conclusion**

**Renée Byng Yancey**  
President and CEO, Community Foundation for  
Northern Virginia



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To our Venue



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**Harry Klaff**  
introduction

## WELCOME

**Harry Klaff** is the Board Chair of the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia and the U.S. President of Avison Young Global.

He leads the firm's U.S. markets and serves on its Global Executive Committee, drawing on more than 30 years of experience in commercial real estate. Prior to joining Avison Young, he held senior leadership roles at JLL, where he structured complex transactions for major clients across industries. Klaff has completed more than \$10 billion in global transactions and is known for strengthening client engagement platforms. A long-time civic leader, he has served on the boards of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Mindshare, The Madeira School, and CFNOVA, where he previously chaired the Community Leadership Committee. He holds an M.B.A. from Loyola College and a B.A. from Vanderbilt University.



**Paul Misener**  
keynote

## KEYNOTE

**Paul Misener** is the Founder and Principal of Misener Innovation LLC.

An engineer, scientist, and attorney, he spent 23 years at Amazon, most recently as Vice President for Global Innovation Policy and Communications, where he built and led the company's global public policy organization. Misener has testified before Congress more than 30 times and advised policymakers and leaders worldwide. He previously served in senior roles at the FCC, Intel, and the law firm Wiley Rein. He chaired the FAA technical subcommittee that recommended allowing airline passengers to use electronic devices during all phases of flight, a change adopted internationally. Misener holds degrees from Princeton University and George Mason University, which also awarded him an honorary doctorate. He serves on several regional boards, including Inova Health System and George Mason University's President's Innovation Advisory Council.



**Drew Wilder**  
host and moderator

## HOST & MODERATOR

**Drew Wilder** is a Northern Virginia reporter for NBC4.

Drew Wilder is a reporter in NBC4's Northern Virginia Bureau. Wilder's experience covering Virginia began in 2015 when he joined WWBT-TV in Richmond. He anchored and covered issues pertaining to local schools and government. Wilder earned an EMMY Award for his coverage of the "Unite the Right" Rally in Charlottesville. A native of Bourbonnais, I.L., Wilder graduated from Eastern Illinois University with a Communications Studies degree. Right out of college, he began reporting for WCIA-TV in Champaign-Urbana. He anchored the morning news and hosted a lifestyle show there. Wilder's tenure with NBC4 began in January 2019 after brief stops at WJLA-TV and WNBC-TV. An avid runner, soccer player and music fan, Wilder lives in Arlington.



**Renée Byng Yancey**  
conclusion

## CLOSING

**Renée Byng Yancey** is the President and CEO of the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia.

Renée Byng Yancey is a proud Northern Virginia resident. An experienced nonprofit and philanthropy executive, Renée's early career began in the banking industry in her hometown of Philadelphia. Renée is dedicated to social change, strong and thriving organizations and communities, family, and economic success. Her career in the nonprofit sector spans the areas of education, workforce, and community engagement. Prior to CFNOVA, Renée most recently held two inaugural senior leadership roles with the American Institute of Architects leading a team of 100 and 200 global chapters, and management of hundreds of volunteers. She also held a leadership position with the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington in the Pacific Northwest.



## EDUCATION

**Andrew Hanson** is the senior director of employer alignment at Strada Education Foundation.

He leads research and strategic initiatives that strengthen the connection between education and opportunity in partnership with policymakers, educators, and employers. Hanson has 15 years of experience conducting actionable research on education and workforce outcomes and previously served as a senior researcher at the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. His work has appeared in major national media outlets, and he authored *Talent Disrupted*, a widely cited study on graduate underemployment. His recent publication, *What States Should Know About Education and Work — But Don't*, continues this focus. Hanson studied economics, education, and philosophy and began his career through Teach For America in the Saint Louis Public Schools.



## ARTS

**Ethan Heard** is the Associate Artistic Director of Signature Theatre in Arlington, Virginia.

A director, producer, and teacher, he creates theater that builds community and connection. At Signature, he has directed *Soft Power*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, and *Which Way to the Stage*. He co-founded Heartbeat Opera in New York City and led it for eight seasons, helping the company earn national recognition for innovation in opera. His acclaimed adaptation of *Fidelio*, a New York Times Critic's Pick, featured more than 100 incarcerated singers from six prison choirs. Heard's work has been presented at BAM, The Met Museum, and The Kennedy Center, and he has reimagined classics and developed new works across genres. He taught for six years at Yale, where he earned his BA and MFA.



## TRANSPORTATION

**Elizabeth Kersey** is the Vice President of Government and Corporate Affairs for Transurban North America.

She leads the company's government affairs, corporate governance, marketing, and communications functions. Kersey brings more than twenty years of experience directing public policy and government affairs teams, including serving as senior vice president for communications and public policy at PRA Group, where she oversaw global government relations, communications, branding, and community engagement across multiple continents. She previously led government relations at Old Dominion University and held roles with the City of Hampton and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. Kersey has been recognized on the Coastal Virginia Business "150 Most Influential People" list and received a Silver Stevie® Award for communications leadership.



## HEALTHCARE

**Dr. Garima Sharma** is the Martha Schar Endowed Chair in Women's Cardiovascular Health and Director of Preventive Cardiology and Cardio-Obstetrics at Inova Health System.

An international leader in women's cardiovascular health, she previously served on the faculty at Johns Hopkins, where she founded the Cardio-Obstetrics Program. Dr. Sharma has published more than 150 peer-reviewed articles and has led national and international educational conferences in women's heart health. She has held major leadership roles in the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association, contributing to multiple ACC/AHA guidelines and scientific statements. Her research—supported by the NIH and AHA—focuses on cardiovascular disease in women, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, health disparities, and social determinants of health. She also serves as Associate Editor for JACC Advances for Women's Health and Cardio-Obstetrics.



## HOUSING

**Dr. Lisa Sturtevant** is the Chief Economist for Bright MLS.

She leads the organization's research and forecasting efforts, providing market insights for more than 100,000 subscribers across the Mid-Atlantic. A nationally recognized expert in housing economics, she has more than 20 years of experience analyzing economic, demographic, and housing market trends. Prior to joining Bright MLS, she served as Chief Economist for Virginia REALTORS®, founded the housing consultancy LSA Planning, and held research positions with universities and national housing organizations. Dr. Sturtevant is frequently quoted in major media outlets and is a sought-after speaker on housing policy and market conditions. She holds a PhD in public policy from George Mason University, a master's in public policy from the University of Maryland, and a BS in mathematical economics from Wake Forest University.

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✔ **Succession Planning**

We create a strategic plan to protect your key employees and business in the case of an unexpected event.



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Discover more on what makes a business education from Costello *All Together Different*: [business.gmu.edu](https://business.gmu.edu)



## Partnering for a healthier community

As the region's leading nonprofit healthcare provider, we recognize the healing power of community collaboration and teamwork. Inova and our community partners transform ideas into action through partnerships that are designed to lift our communities – bringing care, information and resources to those who need it most.

**Thank you to the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia for your partnership and important work supporting our region.**

[Inova.org](https://Inova.org)

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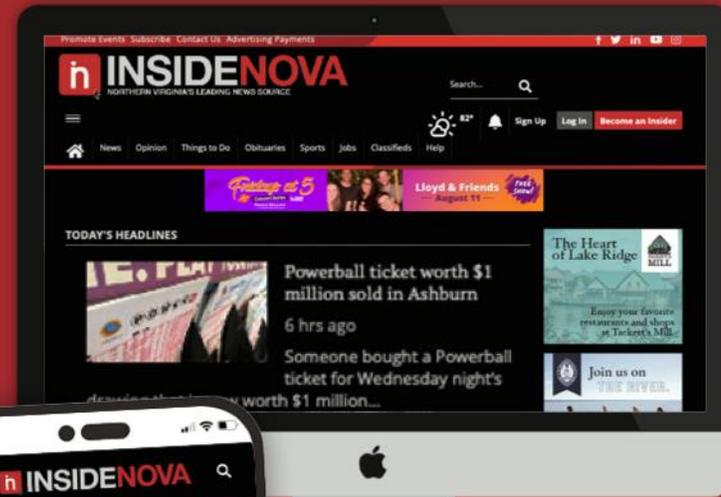
# COMMITTED TO CLIENTS AND COMMUNITY

McGuireWoods is proud to support the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia and its mission of driving positive change and opportunity across our region.

We celebrate the Foundation's work in strengthening communities and fostering innovation — and we are honored to stand alongside so many who share in this commitment.

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# ABOUT CFNOVA

*Making More Possible for Northern Virginia*

## Our Mission

To build a Northern Virginia that works for everyone through philanthropy and community leadership.

## Our Impact

Since 1978, we've partnered with thousands of donors to invest in local causes through donor-advised funds, giving circles, and charitable endowments. We award grants and scholarships, deliver original research through Insight Region®, and convene leaders to address Northern Virginia's most pressing challenges.

## Learn More

Visit [cfnova.org](http://cfnova.org)

### LEADER

Leverage knowledge and connections to take the lead on addressing issues

### CONNECTOR

Bringing together donors, government, business, philanthropy, nonprofits and other partners around a shared vision.

### GRANTMAKER

We support the nonprofit community through grantmaking and data-driven programs.

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Through Insight Region® and community partnerships, we analyze local trends and publish original research.

### FUNDRAISER

We connect donors with their passions.



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@communityfoundationfornova

#CFNOVA #ShapeOfTheRegion #SOTR #NorthernVirginia #NOVAInnovation

# 2026

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND GRANTS

Investing \$745,000 Back Into  
the Region through 45  
Nonprofits



by the numbers *applicant snapshot*

[see full list of grantees >>](#)



nearly 70%

SERVE MULTIPLE  
LOCALITIES ACROSS  
THE REGION

80%

REPORTED DECLINES IN  
FUNDING

2 out of 3

WOULD USE GRANT  
DOLLARS FOR  
PROGRAM DELIVERY

46

NONPROFIT  
APPLICANTS FOCUS ON  
BASIC NEEDS



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