



Panel 1: Protecting Consumers – Leadership at the State and Local Level

Panelists: Consumer protection leaders Vilda Vera Mayuga, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection, and Yael Shavit, Chief of the Consumer Protection Division in the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office,

This amazing conversation raised a very clear warning to start our day: the rapid rise of unregulated fintech could be putting consumers in harm's way. The conversation spotlighted growing concerns around fintech oversight, informed decision-making, and fraud prevention, especially when it comes to cash-advance products marketed as something other than loans.

"I am particularly concerned about the rise of fintech companies that offer cash with the expectation of repayment, yet claim not to be loans," said Shavit. "They are failing to provide consumers with the robust protections that typically apply in Massachusetts."

Both panelists stressed that state-level laws currently serve as the most effective line of defense. And education, they said, is just as critical.

Key Takeaways:

- Strengthen state-level consumer protection laws
- Increase public education and fraud awareness

Panel 2: Building Financial Equity – Launch of the Bank On Massachusetts Coalition

A major milestone took center stage: the official launch of the Bank On Massachusetts Coalition, joining a national movement to connect unbanked and underbanked residents with safe, affordable banking options.

Moderated by Jason Andrade of PFE, the discussion brought together coalition and banking leaders from the surrounding community

Speakers agreed on what makes coalitions work: sustained investment, strong community partnerships, and full-time staffing dedicated to ensuring equitable access. While reinforcing that infrastructure matters.

"A key aspect of coalition sustainability is having dedicated staffing. The greatest strength of a coalition comes from a dedicated host organization supported by a core group."

Panelists pointed to real success already taking shape, including Metro Credit Union's FutureBoss program—which brought 140 new members into the fold.

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Key Takeaways:

- Embed banking access directly into community services
- Secure dedicated staffing to sustain coalition impact
- Use data and partnerships to measure reach and drive expansion



Panel 3: Leveling the Playing Field – Securing Fair Lending Practices for Small Businesses

The final conversation of the day turned to advocacy, fair lending, and ensuring entrepreneurs are not left behind. The message was unified and clear: predatory lending, especially merchant cash advances (MCAs), can devastate small businesses.

“Collective advocacy moves policy forward—we need all of us in this fight,” said Whitfield. “The Small Business Truth in Lending legislation is a key step toward building a fairer, more transparent lending system.”

Locklair urged caution and accountability:

“We’re allowing small business owners to take out lending products that can ultimately destroy their businesses—and that just isn’t right.”

Key Takeaways

- Push for transparent lending disclosures
- Advance small business truth-in-lending legislation
- Strengthen advocacy and education for entrepreneurs

A Call to Collective Action

Across all three panels, a shared theme emerged: Financial equity isn’t a solo effort. It requires collaboration across government, nonprofits, and the financial sector, and a commitment to transparency, accountability, and community voice.



Volunteer Spotlight

This month’s volunteer is Reese Miller and her sister Olivia Wilson.

It’s wonderful to recognise this duo for their volunteer work this month. Their selflessness and dedication to helping others are truly inspiring.



Event News

Join us for our upcoming food drive and help make a difference in our community. Let’s work together to fight hunger and provide support to those in need. Here are the details:

- Date: 05 May 2035
- Time: 10am-12pm
- Location: 123 Anywhere St., Any City

Day 2 Recap



Panel 1: What Does Trust in Banking Really Mean?

Moderator: Sabrina Correia (JP Morgan Chase)

Speakers: Dana Neshe (Middlesex Savings), Julieann Thurlow (Reading Cooperative), Ryan Bailey (Cambridge Savings)

“Branches aren’t dead — they’ve evolved into advice centers.”
- Ryan Bailey



Even in a digital banking world, a physical branch still matters. When life gets stressful, with situations such as fraud, emergencies, and big financial decisions, people want to sit across from someone they trust.

Key Takeaways:

- Branches remain essential for trust and crisis support
- People need real humans for big financial moments
- Personalized, community-based banking is here to stay



Panel 2: Lawrence Community Rising

Moderator: Juan Pablo Bonilla Santiago (United Way of Massachusetts Bay)

Speakers: Erika Hernandez (ACT Lawrence), Glynn Lloyd (NIC), Jess Andors (Lawrence CommunityWorks)

“Doing business **in** these communities is good business.”
- Jess Andors



Local leaders from Lawrence, MA, shared how real investment, not charity, is fueling economic momentum. Financial institutions that partner deeply with neighbors see both better outcomes and better business.

Key Takeaways:

- Community organizations are powerful economic engines
- Trust grows when banks invest where they serve



Panel 3: CEO Panel – Branches that Build Communities

Moderator: Sabrina Correia (JP Morgan Chase)

Speakers: Dana Neshe (Middlesex Savings), Julieann Thurlow (Reading Cooperative), Ryan Bailey (Cambridge Savings)

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Closing Keynote: Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman, Author of ‘The Doube Tax’

The fireside chat on financial equity closed the summit with a powerful message from Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman, author of *The Double Tax*. She challenged common misconceptions about diversity, emphasizing that diversity and merit are not opposites but complements. Opoku-Agyeman also spoke about the importance of protecting institutional integrity and uplifting strong, principled leadership, highlighting the resilience of leaders like Governor Lisa Cook. Her remarks left attendees with a clear call to action: advancing equity requires courage, accountability, and the unwavering defense of inclusive leadership.

Key Topics and Quotes:

On diversity:

- “Those who attack DEI think diversity and merit are substitutes — not complements.”

On institutional integrity:

- “You do not want an institution to be reshaped by one man’s ego.”

On leadership that gets targeted:

“She’s being attacked as if she’s the weakest link — and she is anything but.”

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