2022 AWARD RECIPIENTS
Albert Shen is a strategy leader on the Verizon Public Strategy Team where he is developing new digital transformation strategies for the public sector utilizing 5G, advanced communications and other public domain solution use cases in the Federal and State, Local, Education (SLED) market. Previously, he was a Senior Advisor for the Toyota Mobility Foundation working on developing new smart city mobility innovation & sustainable energy investment strategies in U.S. cities and was also a Senior Advisor in Advanced Technology and Research at Toyota North America where he was developing advanced next generation mobility strategies on transportation innovation and to integrate new future mobility technologies with federal, state & local governmental transportation Smart City initiatives.

In 2014, he was appointed by President Obama to be the National Deputy Director of the U.S Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency. His role was to create U.S. jobs by developing federal polices; new impact investment models and other new business innovation initiatives that promote the growth and global competitiveness of businesses owned and operated by minority and immigrant business owners. Before he joined the Obama Administration he leveraged his background as a minority business owner himself for 15 years as CEO of Shen Consulting, Inc., a successful transportation & civil engineering consulting firm that managed large-scale airport capital programs & heavy civil, transportation & environmental programs in the Pacific Northwest.

He is also the chair of the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Business Leaders Finance Council an informal national coalition of Asian American business executives and entrepreneurs that advocates for greater AAPI representation in government & politics.

In 2012 he was awarded the U.S. Small Business Administration Region 10 Minority Champion of the Year Award. He is a dedicated community leader and has volunteered his time to lead educational institutions, community organizations, business organizations and political advocacy groups. He served as Board Chair of the Seattle Community College Board of Trustees, and as Vice Chair of the Washington State Commission on Asian and Pacific American Affairs. In 2013 he was a candidate for Seattle City Council. Shen earned his bachelor’s degree in chemistry and environmental science from the University of Washington.
Maria Singh has more than a decade of experience in telecommunications and is a trusted advisor and Cybersecurity Engineer in Vulnerability and Risk Management representing T-Mobile's Cybersecurity Trust and Protection organization. Her role as a security leader is to minimize the overall risk to the enterprise. Maria successfully achieves this by implementing multifaceted strategies that includes creating synergies and influential leadership with cross-functional partner teams where she provides an informed analysis of the threats, exploits and vulnerabilities using a risk-based vulnerability prioritization to recommend compensating controls and remediation solutions.

Maria has a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of Missouri and is also a graduate of the Executive Program from Cornell University's Johnson Graduate School of Management in Marketing Strategies and holds various industry leading Cybersecurity certifications.

Maria Singh has been actively serving for the last 6 years on T-Mobile's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Multicultural Employee Resource Group's leadership board to celebrate and advance the cultural diversity of our company and our customers. Maria Singh was recognized for her work in DE&I efforts at T-Mobile.

Additionally, Maria Singh is actively serving on the leadership squad for the Technology DE&I Alliance. This squad has been focused on addressing unconscious bias in traditional hiring practices. One creative solution to address this has been to enhance the human resource management platform which is able to increase visibility of underrepresented talent of minority employees' profile. Additionally, Maria Singh has been supporting an internal initiative, the High School Cybersecurity Internship Program to encourage young women to consider careers in cybersecurity.

Some of Maria's accomplishments includes co-leading the Wuhan Relief Fundraising efforts to fundraise much needed medical supplies at the advent of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Maria worked with a local not-for profit organization to set-up a pop-up event at T-Mobile's HQ2 location providing food and cultural entertainment as a fundraiser. Over $3K was collected to provide medical supplies such as face masks, and eye protection for the doctors who were overwhelmed by the onset of the pandemic.
Michelle Rhee was named deputy general counsel for Wealth & Investment Management (WIM) in 2020. She joined Wells Fargo in 2018 as assistant general counsel for Wells Fargo Asset Management, a WIM business. Her responsibilities have included serving as chief legal officer for Wells Fargo Funds, coordinating counsel for the WIM division, and acting as a key partner for numerous WIM business initiatives.

Prior to joining Wells Fargo, Michelle was Associate General Counsel at Bank of America Corporation from March 2004 until February 2018. At BAC, Michelle headed a legal team supporting the global distribution of securities products to high net worth individuals within the Merrill Lynch, U.S. Trust and Merrill Edge businesses. Michelle’s team of 24 attorneys provided origination, development and regulatory advice on a variety of securities products including mutual funds, alternative investment funds, derivatives, collective vehicles, 529 plans, separately managed accounts, HSAs, IRAs and equity and fixed income transactions.

Prior to joining BAC, Michelle was an associate and junior partner at Hale and Dorr from 1997 to 2004 in the firm’s Asset Management practice.

Michelle is a member of the MA and CA bars. She holds a B.A. from Smith College and a J.D. from Boston University School of Law.
Paolo is currently the Vice President of Program Development and Business Optimization at AARP Foundation. In his role, he leads a team that develops new solutions for low income seniors in the US to access healthcare, housing, food security, and income security. In his role, he also oversees optimization of the Foundation’s resources to achieve their impact goals. AARP's goals are to achieve $1.3 Trillion in tax refunds/rebates, $750 Million in Benefits (Private and Public), and $750 Million in new income for those that they serve. The Foundation does not do awards specifically to individual staff members. However, he has represented the FDN in numerous events/activities including their work with grantees that focus on improving the lives of AAPI’s across the country.

He is a first-generation immigrant to the United States from the Philippines. Unfortunately, the challenge of adapting to a new country and culture are always challenging for anyone. From a career perspective, this is the first time he's worked for a non-profit company. The obstacles were simply a lack of experience and training on issues that are more relevant to non-profits that the traditional for-profit. In order to triumph, his strategy was to take as many courses he could to understand non-profit organizational management. He's also been fortunate that the leaders of the organization have given him the time and resources to overcome that obstacle.

He focuses on mentoring other minorities in his company in leadership development. He developed a workshop on building a personal business model canvas that he leads for everyone, but specifically focus on minorities by working with their multiple SEERG organizations without the FDN. He also participates in the leadership develop training for their mid-level managers/directors called ADEPT.

Aside from his role at the AARP Foundation, which is a non-profit charity, in his spare time, he's currently in a leadership position as CEO for a non-profit in Baltimore, MD called Core Immersive Labs that specifically focuses on helping underserved populations and organizations tell their own stories through virtual reality and data visualizations. The organization also serves Syrian refugees living in Jordanian refugee camps to train for careers in the metaverse. The company has helped over 150 people acquire jobs and has delivered over $2.4 million in new income for the participants. He has been in this role since October of 2021.