

Yining Lei, AICP

name pronounced “yee-ning lay” | she/her/hers
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Education

- 2026 Ph.D., City and Regional Planning, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Dissertation: “Under the RADar: Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) and Residential (In)stability in New York City and Philadelphia”
Committee: Lance Freeman (chair), Vincent J. Reina, Akira Drake Rodriguez
Field Exams: Housing (with Lance Freeman) and Community Development (with Domenic Vitiello)
- 2020 M.S., Urban Planning, Columbia University, USA
- 2018 B.Eng., Construction Management and B.A., English Language, Tsinghua University, China

Publications

- 2026 Xu, W., Y. Lee, **Y. Lei**, Z. Zhou, Y. Zhang, & L. Freeman. “[Where did they go after HOPE VI? A longitudinal study of long-term neighborhood attainment outcomes in Chicago.](#)” *Housing Policy Debate*, 1–28.
- Freeman, L., **Y. Lei**, & M. Maaoui. “[Before the Ground Breaks: Is Inclusionary Zoning a Shield or a Signal of Gentrification?](#)” *Land Use Policy* 167 (2026): 108033.
- 2025 Freeman, L., Y. Lee, **Y. Lei**, & W. Xu (**equal authorship**). “[Measuring Residential Mobility: A Historical Overview of Novel Data and Methodological Approaches.](#)” *Journal of Planning Literature*. OnlineFirst.
- 2023 Freeman, L. & **Y. Lei**. “[An Overview of Affordable Housing in the United States.](#)” Penn Institute for Urban Research (Penn IUR) Policy Brief.

Under Review and In Preparation (Draft available by request)

Lei, Y. “Displaceability under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD): Theory, Evidence, and Future Directions” (Revised & Resubmitted)

Lei, Y., Y. Lee, W. Xu, Y. Zhang, & L. Freeman. “A Twist of Fate? Tracking Changes in Local Migration Patterns in the Wake of Inclusionary Zoning” (Revised & Resubmitted)

Lei, Y. “Does Preserving Public Housing with Non-public Partners Keep Residents in Place? A Study of Exit Patterns in Rental Assistance Demonstration Conversions”

Teaching Experience

Instructor

- 2024-2025 Co-Instructor, with Travis Decaminada, Undergraduate Urban Research Colloquium (CPLN 5280/URBS 4280)
Undergraduate elective seminar on urban research methods [\[course link\]](#)
- 2025 Workshop Instructor & Teaching Assistant, Fair Housing, Segregation, and the Law (SOCI 1150)

Teaching Assistantship

- Spring 2026 Urban Economics and Public Finance (CPLN 5020)
Fall 2024 Introduction to Housing, Community and Economic Development (HCED) (CPLN 5200)
Fall 2023 Introduction to City Planning: History, Theory & Practice (CPLN 5000)
Fall 2022 Quantitative Planning Analysis Methods (CPLN 5010)

Occasional studio critics for Master of City Planning Studio I (CPLN 6000), Master of Landscape Architecture and Master of City Planning Joint Studio (LARP 5010), Fundamentals of Urban Design (CPLN 6600).

Professional Experience

Full-Time Position

- 2020-2022 Research Analyst & GIS Coordinator, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
Civil Service Title: Associate Housing Development Specialist (2021-2022; promoted in 2021)
Community Coordinator (2020-2021)
- Led the development of statistical models to inform the prioritization and sequencing of Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD)/Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) projects within NYCHA's redevelopment pipeline
 - Created [public-facing maps and visualizations](#) for NYCHA's RAD/PACT program, enhancing public oversight and accountability
 - Managed and updated NYCHA administrative, population, transportation, and neighborhood data to inform community outreach and engagement processes
 - Planned and facilitated resident meetings and design workshops

Selected Internships and Research Assistantships

- 2022-2024 Research Assistant, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Spring 2020 Planning & Urban Design Intern, CallisonRTKL, New York, NY
Summer 2019 GIS Research & Policy Intern, New Yorkers for Parks, New York, NY
Summer 2017 Assistant Construction Manager, Shanghai Construction Group, Shanghai, China
Spring 2017 Strategic Consulting Intern, Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), Beijing, China
2016-2017 Environmental Research Assistant, Department of Construction Management, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

Selected Presentations (* invited; † student mentee)

“Does Preservation-Based Public Housing Redevelopment Keep Residents in Place? A Mixed Methods Study of the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program in Philadelphia”

With Sabrina Guo †

- 2026 *Housing Policy Debate* Symposium, Philadelphia, PA

“Under the RADar: Rental Assistance Demonstration and Residential Instability”

With Sabrina Guo †

- Lecture on Subsidized Housing for the Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA *

“Good RAD Gone Bad? Rental Assistance Demonstration and Displacement in New York City”

- 2025 ACSP Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN
- 2025 International Conference on Urban Affairs (ICUA), Vancouver, Canada (accepted; did not attend per the conference committee’s travel guidance)

“A Twist of Fate? Tracking Changes in Local Migration Patterns in the Wake of Inclusionary Zoning”

With Lance Freeman, Yeonhwa Lee, and Wenfei Xu

- Summer 2025 Housing Symposium, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan *
- 2024 ACSP Annual Conference, Seattle, WA

“Citizen Participation in Public-Private Partnerships: Tick Box or Real Change? The Implications of the Rental Assistance Demonstration in New York City”

- 2024 ICUA, New York, NY

“The Delayed Growth of China’s Health Impact Assessment: Disentangling Causes from Different Disciplines”

With Junteng Zhao

- Winner, 2023 International Association for China Planning (IACP) Urban Digital Transformation and Healthy City Award
- 2023 ACSP Annual Conference, Chicago, IL
- 2023 IACP Annual Conference, Tianjin, China

“The Recurring American Dream? Understanding the Effect of Remote Work on Suburban Housing Prices”

With Tiffany M. Tran

- 2023 Wharton School Data Science Live, Philadelphia, PA *

“Wrong Color of COVID-19: Case ≠ Race”

With Zheng (Joyce) Xin

- 2021 American Planning Association National Planning Conference, Online

Grants

External

2024 NSF Grant for Exploratory Research on AI and Society. “Neighborhood Dynamics and the Inequality of Place: Using Large-Scale Mobility Behavior Data to Understand Socio-Spatial Disparities in Community Connectedness”. **Contributor – data cleaning and analysis** with Constantine E. Kontokosta (PI) and Lance Freeman (Co-PI). \$400,000.

Columbia University GSAPP Incubator Prize. “PeopleACT: Prioritizing Residents in New York City Public Housing Renovation”. **Co-PI** with Aline Estefam. \$10,000.

2023 ACSP and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Case Study Award. “Are Accessory Dwelling Units a Solution to the Housing Crisis? An Inquiry Case Study of the ADU Pilot Program in Boston, MA”. **PI**. \$2,000.

Conference Travel Grant. International Association for China Planning. \$500.

2022 Lincoln Institute of Land Use Policy. “Inclusionary Zoning in New York and Paris: Trojan Horse or Antidote to Gentrification?” **Contributor – data cleaning and analysis** with Lance Freeman (PI) and Magda Maaoui (Co-PI). \$49,800.

Internal

2026 Undergraduate Urban Research Colloquium Joint Research Fund. University of Pennsylvania. **PI**. \$2,000.

2025 The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly Research Student Travel Grant. University of Pennsylvania. \$780.

2024 The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly Research Student Travel Grant. University of Pennsylvania. \$800.

2019-2020 Travel Fund Award. Department of Urban Planning. Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. \$1,600.

Leadership and Services

To the Community and the Profession

2021-2022 Community Board Member. New York City Manhattan Community Board 1.

2020 Moderator. New York City Women in Leadership Summit (advancing women’s leadership in the public sector of New York City).

Conference Organizing. Hindsight 2020 (annual conference on urban planning, organized by the American Planning Association New York Metro Chapter’s Diversity Committee).

To the University and Academia

2024-2025 Stuart Weitzman School of Design Ph.D. Representative. Graduate and Professional Student Assembly, University of Pennsylvania.

2024 Conference Session Organizing. “Research on residential mobility: New horizons and challenges”, with Lance Freeman, Yeonhwa Lee, and Wenfei Xu. 2024 ACSP Annual Conference, Seattle, WA.

2023 Panelist. Pre-Doctoral Workshop for Underrepresented Students of Color and LGBTQIA+ Students, 2023 ACSP Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.

Student Participant. ACSP International Student Workshop: Student Perspectives on Globalizing the Planning Curriculum and Classroom, 2023 ACSP Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.

Session Chair. 2023 International Association for China Planning Conference, Tianjin, China.

2022 Board Member and Panel Chair. Wharton Future of Cities Conference, Philadelphia, PA.

2019 Conference Organizing. Urban China Network, Department of Urban Planning, Columbia University.

Occasional Reviewer for Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, American Planning Association National Planning Conferences.

Awards, Honors, and Scholarships

2022-2027 Stuart Weitzman School of Design Fellow, University of Pennsylvania. Extended five-year fellowship.

Penn Presidential Ph.D. Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania. \$30,000.

2023 Carmen Lee Memorial Scholarship, Real Estate Network Empowering Women. \$5,000.

Urban Digital Transformation and Healthy City Award, International Association for China Planning. \$1,000.

2021 Certificate of Appreciation, Real Estate Development Department, NYCHA.

2019-2020 Graduate Research Assistantship, Department of Urban Planning, Columbia University. \$15,728.

2018 1st Prize of Gammon Scholarship, School of Civil Engineering, Tsinghua University. CNY ¥1,000.

2016 1st Prize of Samuel Tak Lee (STL) MIT-Tsinghua Real Estate Entrepreneurship Competition. CNY ¥30,000.

Professional Credentials

AICP Certified
City Planner, NYC Citywide Administrative Services
LEED AP BD+C (inactive)

Issued Dec 2022; Credential ID 34574
Issued Sep 2021; Exam No. 1112
Issued Jul 2020; Credential ID 11363987-AP-BD+C

Student Supervision and Mentorship

Graduate Research Assistant

Haoyu Zhu (UPenn MCP '25), Xinya Liu (UPenn MCP '25), Xiyu Chen (Columbia MSUP '21)

Undergraduate Research Project Mentorship

Sabrina Guo (UPenn CAS '26), Natalie Vasquez (UPenn CAS '26)