

KEVIN CHAN (MBA '14)

Industry: Nonprofit Management & Policy Advocacy

Where he works: Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

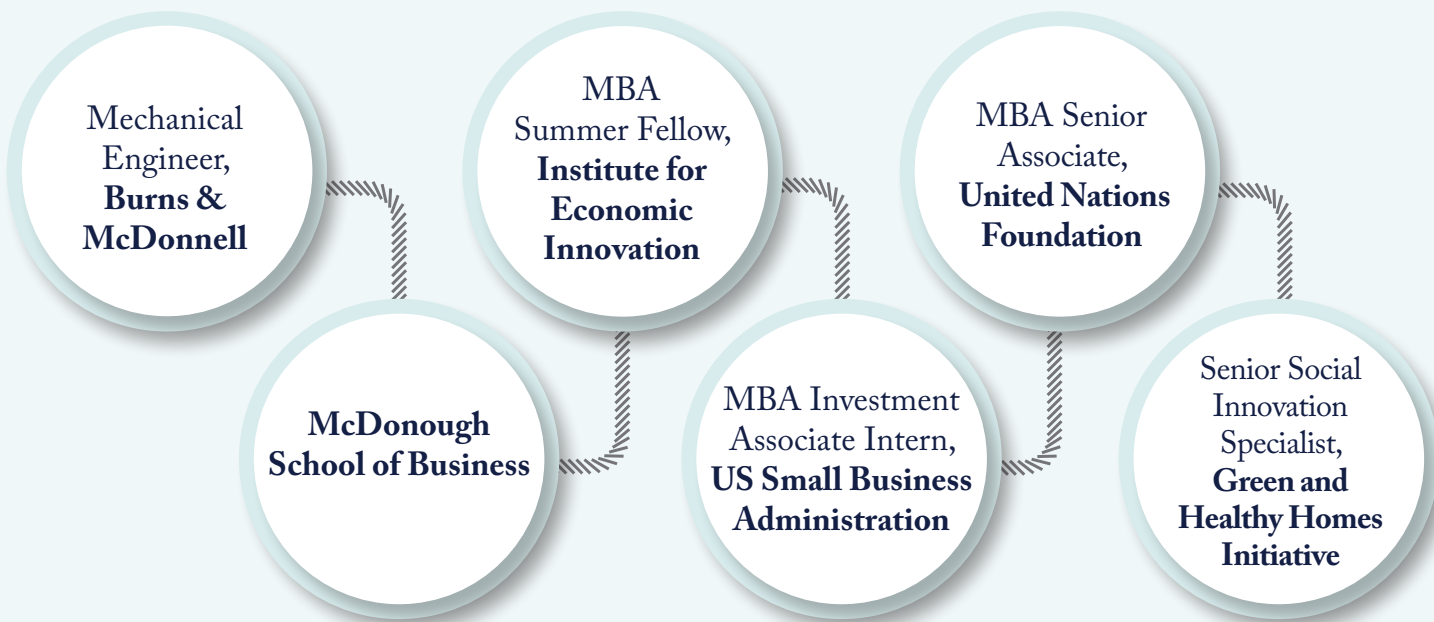
Job Title: Senior Social Innovation Specialist



In America, your ZIP code can carry more weight on your health outcomes than your genetic code. Chan works at the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative, a nonprofit working to improve the social determinants of health, specifically the link between unhealthy housing and unhealthy families. As an innovation specialist, Chan provides technical assistance to organizations around the country that are building healthy homes programs and exploring innovative ways to finance them. He “outcomes-based” finance projects, coordinates partnerships between policymakers and healthcare providers, develops financial models related to public health, and advises on grant compliance.

Job Functions: Management // Finance // Operations // Compliance

CHAN'S CAREER PATHWAY



“Before business school I was in engineering. McDonough was always going to be a way for me to transition into the nonprofit social sector.”

Useful classes:
Impact Investing, Social Entrepreneurship, Accelerating Innovation (*Melissa Bradley, adjunct professor*);
Fundamentals of Finance (*Lee Pinkowitz, associate professor*);
Valuations (*Sandeep Dahiya, Akkaway Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship*)

“I found it effective to do as many internships and part-time jobs as possible. In my second semester, I was doing 10-hour internships while I was finishing classes, which was really cool. I was just getting as much experience as I could.”

“Even though we’re a nonprofit, our work follows a consulting model. We work with most organizations on a contract-basis, and I spend most of my day-to-day work managing projects throughout their analysis process. Everything – from engagement to management – is client-facing.”

CAREER ADVICE FOR MBAS:

Take the opportunity to make impact your full-time job. “When I was working as an engineer, I was doing a lot of volunteering on the side, mostly working in school mentorship programs. I realized that work was a lot more fulfilling than what I was doing for my actual job, coming up with equipment pricing and specifications at a refinery. So I decided to follow that feeling of making an impact and turn it into a full-time job. A lot of people seem to think the only path [to giving back] is to work in the corporate sector, make money, and then donate it back. That’s the only paradigm that’s presented to us. I always wonder, though, why do that if I can be making an impact in my day to day life?”

Your work will always be tied to your mission – but also to your funders. “Just before COVID-19 hit, we were planning to branch out to new, different services. But now a lot of public health agencies are in complete COVID-response mode, so a lot of the public health funding is in a very similar situation. We are now pivoting to react to these new funding opportunities, rather than following our original business plan from last year. This is something a lot of nonprofits have to deal with, especially when funding is so tied to a certain program or service. Ideally, nonprofits would benefit from more unrestricted funding so they can be more internally flexible, and I do think the sector is catching up to that reality. But for now, we have to pay close attention to our funding opportunities.”

IN HIS WORDS:

“We work to highlight the social determinants of health. That means thinking about everything outside of the hospital room, outside of the four walls of the doctor’s office, that affects people’s health and has a direct effect on the bottom line of the healthcare system: things like minimizing lead poisoning for children or preventing injuries for those aging in place.

For example, we’ve worked with Medicaid to help them invest in programs that produce a return by way of cost savings: less patients in the hospital, etc. This can happen in ways we don’t normally consider, like installing an air conditioning unit in a child’s bedroom as a preventative healthcare expense.

In our D.C. office, we work with policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels to think about ways that they can use policy to drive investment in home healthcare programs and services. We also partner with nonprofits on the ground to build out their services and programs; we do a lot of business development for these organizations, looking at ways that they can leverage data to do things like assess the ROI of a new partnership with Medicaid or a private insurance company.”

THE IMPACT SPECTRUM: Green and Healthy Homes Initiative

