

KAREN CHOI

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EDUCATION

Harvard University

Cambridge, MA

B.A., Special Concentration in Urban Studies and Social Justice

May 2026

GPA: 3.84 | Cum Laude, Highest Honors in Field

Interdisciplinary policy and design coursework at Harvard GSD, Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), MIT DUSP

Certificates: Mindich Program for Engaged Scholars Certificate in Civic Engagement, Citation in Chinese

Awards: Edward H. Potter Prize, Fairbank Center Grant, Amara Balthrop-Lewis Endowed Fund, Mindich Service Fellowship, Harvard Mellon Urban Initiative Research Grant, Harvard Sustainability Grant

EXPERIENCE

Harvard Climate Sociology Lab

Cambridge, MA

Participatory Research Assistant

Jun 2026 - Present

- Conduct participatory action research with Tribal leadership, residents, government officials, local non-profits, universities, and the Lowlander Center in Louisiana to aid climate-displacement advocacy.
- Design the Central City Seafood Market, a mobile market to connect local shrimpers with New Orleans residents, expanding food access and economic stability. Assist with zoning, permitting, and funding.
- Explore financial pressures faced by the Biloxi-Chitimacha tribe. Research pathway to form a CDBG-DR Citizen Advisory Committee to strengthen Indigenous input during disaster recovery spending.
- Built an interactive GIS dashboard (R/Shiny) mapping income, poverty, flood risk, and borrow pits in 60+ census tracts in Lafourche & Terrebonne Parishes. Supported spatial, data-driven planning.
- Produced an extreme-heat poster and brochure (Figma, InDesign) covering risk factors, hydration self-assessment, and heat-illness response protocols. Distributed to ~1,500 low-income households.

Rebuilding Together Boston

Boston, MA

Grant Writer

Jan 2025 – Jun 2025

- Secured ~100K (FY25) in funding towards home renovations for low-income homeowners.

Research and Development Fellow

Jun 2024 - Aug 2024

- Authored grant proposals that secured ~\$400K (FY24) toward community revitalization.
- Assessed housing conditions during site visits, and supported home renovations during ReBuild days.
- Managed applicant and community stakeholder data (Salesforce), streamlining outreach tracking and strengthening relationship continuity across renovation projects.
- Analyzed racial and economic disparities related to homeownership in Greater Boston (R, ArcGIS), informing organizational strategy to expand equitable housing access for Black and brown communities.

Harvard College Women's Center

Cambridge, MA

Advocacy and Action Intern

Aug 2022 - May 2023

- Directed a 12-organization committee to plan Women's Week 2023. Coordinated cross-group logistics.
- Managed a \$5,000 budget to plan 15 community events. Reached 450+ attendees.

RESEARCH

Community Care in Practice: Dementia, Space, and Resilience in Pingxi, Taiwan

Pingxi, Taiwan

Senior Thesis | Summa Cum Laude

Spring 2026

- Conducted 3 weeks of ethnographic fieldwork grounded in literature review, observation, and 12 formal interviews with stakeholders (planners, community leaders, doctors, nurses, residents, and caregivers).
- Analyzed how design, culture, and relationship longevity created an informal community-care network, reducing caregiver strains, supporting patient dignity and aging-in-place, and filling gaps in formal care.

SKILLS

Professional: Stakeholder Relations, Community Engagement, Participatory Action Research, Ethnography, Oral History, Land Use & Zoning Research, Policy Analysis, Grant Writing, Prototyping and Design

Technical: Figma, ArcGIS, R, Rhino, Enscape, Adobe Suite (Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator), Microsoft Suite