Nathan M. Newmark

Faculty Member, Department of Civil Engineering, 1934-81
Head, Department of Civil Engineering, 1956-73
Chairman, Digital Computer Laboratory, 1947-57

National leader in Civil Engineering education and research, and prominent consulting engineer

Fields of technical endeavor: structural engineering, engineering mechanics, numerical methods, materials, structural and soil dynamics, and earthquake engineering

Born: *Plainfield, NJ, September 22, 1910*

Died: *Urbana, IL, January 25, 1981*

Education: *Rutgers University, BS, 1930*
University of Illinois, MS and PhD, 1932 and 1934, respectively

Founding Member, National Academy of Engineering, 1964

Member, National Academy of Sciences, 1966

Recipient of the National Medal of Science, 1968

Awarded honorary doctorates by Rutgers University, the University of Leige, the University of Notre Dame, and the National Civil Engineering Laboratory of Lisbon

Recipient of the Washington Award

Honorary member of the American Society of Civil Engineers

Recipient of five major national awards of ASCE, as well as numerous other awards and honors

Newmark Civil Engineering Laboratory

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
presents

The Spring 2026

Newmark Distinguished Lecture

Disaster-Resilient Housing Via Systems Change

Dr. Elizabeth Hausler

Founder & Former CEO of Build Change

Monday, April 27, 2026
4:00 – 5:00 pm
CEE Building,
Room 1017

Reception in Lobby immediately following

Latino-Americana Tower in Mexico City
Seismic design by
Nathan M. Newmark

Newmark served as the earthquake design consultant on the forty-three story Latino-Americana Tower in Mexico City. A plaque is mounted on that building, which withstood strong earthquakes in 1957 and 1985 without damage, attesting to his design accomplishment.

The Spring 2026
Newmark Distinguished Lecture

Dr. Elizabeth Hausler
Founder & Former CEO
Build Change

Disaster-Resilient Housing Via Systems Change

Abstract: Around the world, low-income communities remain disproportionately vulnerable to earthquakes, hurricanes, and other climate-driven disasters—not because safer construction is impossible, but because the systems that shape how housing is financed, built, and regulated are misaligned with resilience. In this talk, Dr. Elizabeth Hausler, Founder & Former CEO of Build Change, outlines the organization's systems change approach to transforming disaster-prone housing at scale.

Dr. Hausler will describe how Build Change works across the full ecosystem—governments, financial institutions, builders, homeowners, and technology partners—to embed resilience into housing policy, lending practices, construction training, and digital tools. She will highlight real-world examples of how structural retrofitting, climate-smart upgrades, and pro-poor financing mechanisms can become mainstream when systemic barriers are removed and incentives are aligned.

Through strategic partnerships with governments, financial institutions, NGOs, and local communities, Build Change has influenced housing policy and building standards in nearly 30 countries, and directly contributed to more than 280,000 safer buildings, protecting over 1.4 million people and safeguarding over five billion dollars in housing assets. Its innovative model has won multiple international awards, including the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship and recognition for advancing gender equity and resilience in the built environment.

Ultimately, the talk demonstrates that resilient housing is not a technical challenge alone but a systemic one—and that lasting, scalable impact requires shifting the rules, norms, and markets that determine how homes are built. Dr. Hausler will share lessons learned from two decades of global implementation, along with a practical framework for any organization or government seeking to drive systems change for safer, more resilient communities.

Bio: Dr. Elizabeth Hausler is the Founder and former CEO of Build Change. Elizabeth is a renowned social innovator, women's rights champion, and relentless advocate for safe housing. She is a global authority on engineering, financing and policy for resilient housing, post-disaster reconstruction, and systems change. Inspired by her Fulbright Fellowship to India and experience as a brick mason, Elizabeth's strategic direction propelled Build Change from its humble beginnings in 2004 to a global powerhouse spanning five continents.

Elizabeth established Build Change with a singular mindset: to make every home, and every family, disaster-resilient. Her visionary approach has not only shaped global development policy and catalyzed change in the post-disaster housing world, but has also positioned resilient housing as a cornerstone of reconstruction and disaster risk reduction endeavors worldwide.

Elizabeth is the first woman leader to win the five major awards for social entrepreneurship and innovation from Echoing Green, Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation, Ashoka, the Schwab Foundation, and the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship.

Elizabeth is a newly elected member of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE). She was elected to the National Academy of Construction in 2024. She was honored with the University of California, Berkeley's Campanile Excellence in Achievement Award in 2018. A distinguished alumna of UC-Berkeley, Elizabeth holds an M.S. and Ph.D. in Civil Engineering, an M.S. from the University of Colorado and a B.S. from the University of Illinois. Her expertise has been sought after at renowned conferences, prestigious universities, and leading media outlets worldwide, including The New York Times, BBC News, Forbes, Elle Magazine, ABC News, and Bloomberg Businessweek.