



LIHEAP2021

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

National Grantee Virtual Training Conference

March 1-3, 2021

SPEAKER BIOSKETCHES

Anita Alford
Chief Information Security Officer
Administration for Children and Families, HHS

Anita Alford leads ACF's Cybersecurity and Privacy Division, with responsibility across the agency for Information Security and Privacy. In this role, I stood up the Cybersecurity and Privacy Division of the Office of the Chief Information Officer. This includes the Privacy Program, Policy and Training Branch; Cyber Defense Branch and finally a Risk Management Branch. Previously, I spent 30 years supporting every branch of service, at one time or another, for the Department of Defense; beginning with my 6 years active duty for the U.S. Navy.

My career has been a logical progression of the protection of government data and systems, while ensuring the Mission is a success and done in a secure manner. My early roles were a combination of Security, Computer Security and Systems Management. Today my role is not much different, we just have new terms for the protection of data.

Jane Blank
Section Chief
Wisconsin

Jane Blank has been with the State of Wisconsin's energy assistance program for over 20 years and has extensive background in all facets of the energy assistance program. She is the Section Chief of the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) in a Bureau that also includes the Emergency Furnace Program and the Weatherization Program. She has served on the national Performance Management Implementation Work Group (PMIWG) since 2010.

Kirk Burgee
Chief of Staff, Wireline Competition Bureau
Federal Communications Commission

Kirk Burgee is the Chief of Staff of the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau. In his work for the Bureau, Kirk is involved in matters related to broadband deployment, including broadband data mapping and interagency coordination of broadband programs. Kirk is also a Deputy Director of the FCC's Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force, which is tasked with implementing FCC auctions to allocate universal service support for broadband in unserved areas. Prior to joining the FCC in 2005, Kirk practiced telecommunications law in the private sector.

Erica Burrin
Program Manager
Department of Energy

Ms. Burrin currently serves as the Department of Energy's Program Manager for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and oversees a team of professionals located at Headquarters in DC and the Golden Field Office in Golden, CO.

Ms. Burrin has over a decade of experience at the local, state, and federal level in WAP. Prior to working for the Department of Energy, she was the Assistant Manager of Community Action Programs at the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority where she was the state director of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), WAP, and the Low-Income Households Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Her duties included designing, managing, and implementing programs for low-income households in the areas of economic development, energy efficiency, and energy security for the State of Indiana.

Andrew Bryk
Temporary Assistance Specialist
New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Andrew Bryk is currently the New York State Home Energy Assistance Program Bureau Chief. In accordance with that role, he is a Temporary Assistance Specialist in the Division Employment and Income Support Programs and is responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) policies and procedures for the NYS Office of Temporary Disability and Assistance (OTDA). He works directly with the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) and offers advice and consultation in administering the HEAP program in each county. Since joining OTDA in 1990 he has worked in several divisions including Audit and Quality Improvement, and Economic Security.

Kelly Buckson
Senior Manager
South Carolina

Kelly Buckson has been the senior manager for the Community Services Block Grant and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program in the South Carolina Department of Administration's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) for 9 years. Prior to working in the state office, Kelly served as news director

and radio personality for a nationally syndicated radio show. She has built a unique career path in a variety of roles and industries ranging from broadcast to grants management. She received her master's degree in health administration from Webster University and her undergraduate degree in broadcast journalism from Winthrop University. She is a Certified Community Action professional and National Certified Results Oriented Management and Accountability Trainer.

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Chief of Staff
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

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Tim Chappelle
Acting Director, Community Grants
Office of Grants Management, ACF

Timothy Chappelle has been an ACF employee since its inception in 1989. He has worked in the ACF Office of Grants Management as a Grants Management Technician, a Grants Management Specialist, a Grants Management Officer and currently in a dual capacity as the Acting Director of the Community Strengthening Grants Division, where he is responsible for overseeing a diverse portfolio of mandatory and discretionary grants from the following ACF programs: Administration for Native Americans (ANA), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and the Office of Community Services (OCS).

He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army, attended the University of Maryland, and is married to his junior high school sweetheart. He has 5 children and four grandchildren. He loves to ride his motorcycle, play tennis and garden.

Radley Davis
Manager Community Services Program
Redding Rancheria Tribe

Radley currently works for the Redding Rancheria Tribe located in Northern California in the wonderful City of Redding. He is the Manager of Community Services which works with the programs and staff of NAHASDA Housing, Bureau of Indian Affairs Welfare Assistance, Family & Children Services (Tribal Court), Sharing Fund (emergency food & clothing, burial, etc.) and LIHEAP. Radley is a citizen of the Pit River Tribe belonging to the Illmawi Band. He has a wonderful family and enjoys his personal cultural and traditional works.

Bill Freeman
Director, Office of Home Energy Programs
Maryland Department of Human Services

Bill Freeman is the Director of the Maryland Office of Home Energy Programs within the Maryland Department of Human Service. In his capacity as Director, Bill oversees the Maryland Energy Assistance Program and the Electric Universal Service Program and coordinates low income energy issues with the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Public Service Commission, and the Office of Peoples' Counsel. Prior to finding his calling to low income energy issues with the Fuel Fund of Maryland a decade ago, Bill worked in the field of international development with Catholic Relief Services and international security issues with CRDF Global. Bill lives in Baltimore City with his wife and two daughters.

J. Janelle George
Deputy Director
Office of Community Services (OCS)

J. Janelle George serves as the Deputy Director for the Office of Community Services (OCS) and Director of Management Services within OCS. Ms. George joined ACF in 2005 through the Department's Emerging Leaders Program, completing rotations with the Office on Public Health and Emergency Preparedness (OPHEP)/Logistics Team and the Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), Office on Disability (OD), Office of Public Health and Science/Office on Women's Health (OWH)/ Division of Policy and Program Development (DPPD), and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)/Office of Human Services Policy. In her thirteen years within OCS, Ms. George's portfolio has included both the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), where she served as the CSBG Program Specialist for States and Tribes in Regions I and VIII, was responsible for the discretionary grants under the CSBG Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) program and the restructuring of the CSBG T/TA program. Ms. George has also served as the Program Manager for the Assets for Independence (AFI) program, where she oversaw AFI program operations, including grantee training and technical assistance and monitoring site visits.

As the Director of Management Services, Ms. George provides oversight in the areas of budget, human resources and procurement. Her primary responsibility is to strengthen the administrative and management support provided to each of the OCS's four Divisions and six programs. As Acting Director, Ms. George is responsible for the oversight of those divisions and programs, totaling approximately \$1.58 billion in grant funds, all seeking to reduce the causes of poverty, increase opportunity and economic security of individuals and families, and revitalize communities.

Prior to joining HHS, Janelle worked as an Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor at Saint Louis University, School of Social Service and Washington University - St. Louis, George Warren Brown School of Social Work as well as in foster care and adoption at the local non-profit level. Ms. George is a Social Worker with experience in foster care, adoption, criminal justice, and domestic and international community development. She was also a Licensed Behavior Foster Parent for the State of Missouri for four years.

Ms. George received her Master of Public Policy (MPP) from the University of Chicago, Harris Graduate School of Public Policy and her Master of Social Work (MSW) from Saint Louis University, School of Social Service. Her undergraduate degrees in social work and sociology are from North Carolina State University.

Lisa Goben
Senior Compliance and Policy Officer
Oregon Housing and Community Services

Since 2011, Ms. Goben has served as the program compliance officer for Oregon's Low income energy programs at Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS). She is responsible for monitoring and program compliance, with a heavy emphasis and involvement in policy development, program integrity and design as well as program reporting. Ms. Goben also serves as a member of the National Performance Management Implementation Work Group, that assists U.S. Department of Human Services, Division of Energy Assistance and the APPRISE team on Performance Management Implementation. Prior to joining OHCS, she served as the LIHEAP program coordinator at a local community action agency in rural, Northeastern Oregon for many years where she oversaw the delivery and implementation of the LIHEAP program, in addition to other various low income programs. Ms. Goben is an avid salmon fisher and loves spending time outdoors with her family and beloved black lab, Ruby.

Charisse Johnson
Director, Division of Community Assistance
Office of Community Services, HHS

Charisse Johnson is the Director of the Division of Community Assistance, which administers the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Ms. Johnson's career in human services spans over 30 years in a wide range of roles and leadership positions. All of Ms. Johnson's roles have required her to act as a change leader. Ms. Johnson's work in the Administration for Children and Families began in 2010 as a Program Specialist in the Children's Bureau within the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. In 2012, Ms. Johnson became the Branch Chief for the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Discretionary Grant Program in the Office of Family Assistance. Since 2018, Ms. Johnson served as the Director of the Division of Community Strengthening Grants in the Office of Grants Management.

Prior to becoming a federal employee, Ms. Johnson worked in North Carolina's child welfare system. From 2007 to 2010, Charisse served as the Section Chief for North Carolina's Child Welfare System, and in that capacity provided primary leadership and oversight for the state's child welfare system. Ms. Johnson also has experience in the non-profit sector, and has served on a number of state and national boards and advisory groups. As the Deputy Director of Wayne Action Group for Economic Solvency (WAGES), a Community Action Agency in North Carolina, Ms. Johnson had oversight for Head Start, Early Head Start, CSBG, childcare services, and a home visiting program. Ms. Johnson earned a Master's Degree in Social Work from East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. Ms. Johnson has two adult children and two grandchildren.

Lanikque Howard
Director
Office of Community Services (OCS)

Dr. Lanikque Howard as the new Director in the Office of Community Services (OCS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF). As the OCS Director, she will provide leadership and oversight of over \$6 billion in mandatory and discretionary grants through six social service and community development programs.

Dr. Howard served three years in the Obama Administration in the Immediate Office of the Assistant Secretary supporting the development and implementation of ACF policy and cross-cutting initiatives. Prior to returning to ACF, Dr. Howard was the Senior Administrator for Programs at First 5 Alameda County, where she oversaw a number of strategic programs, initiatives, and partnerships aimed at addressing the causes and consequences of poverty, reducing racial disparities, and maximizing the potential of young children and their families. During her tenure, she oversaw First 5's place-based initiatives, early care and education workforce development program, fatherhood and engagement strategies, concrete support programs, maternal and infant health strategies, and medical-legal partnerships.

Dr. Howard also worked at the Institute for Research on Poverty, where she provided technical assistance to county and state government agencies on a range of issues that impact the well-being of marginalized children, families, and communities, including co-leading the modification of statewide child welfare policy.

Dr. Howard received a B.A. in American Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and her MSW and Ph.D. in Social Welfare from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Her research focused on the interaction of human service programs and how uncoordinated policies and programs affect the well-being of dually served families.

Madelena Kee
Senior Programs and Project Specialist
Navajo Nation

Madelena Kee is of the Navajo Tribe. Her clans are red cheek people born for Water Flow Together. Her maternal grandparents are Near the Water and her paternal grandparents are Big water. She is a wife, proud mother of three, from Wheatfield's, Arizona. Madelena currently manages several financial assistance service programs for the Navajo people with honor, pride and respect under the Navajo Nation Division of Social Services. She earned her Master's Degree in Business Administration from Colorado Technical University. She began her career with the Navajo Nation Government in 2008 as an Administrative Services Officer. She has seven years of experience with LIHEAP, GA, BA, CSBG and NEI programs. In 2020, Madelena was elevated to supervise and manage all financial assistance programs and its staff as the Senior Programs and Project Specialist.

Mausami Kothari
Director
Payment Management System (invited)

Mausami Kothari serves as an Acting Director, at Payment Management System (PMS). In her current position, she oversees all operational activities within the organization. She is actively involved in supporting the Grant Closeout Initiative at HHS and is supporting the federal financial reporting aspects of the grant. Prior to joining PMS, she served as a Grants Officer for the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), overseeing various programs in the Division of Mandatory Grants. She has over 16 years of experience in government financial and grants management experience and serves as a subject matter expert in the areas of grants management; internal controls, financial reporting, and grants business process re-design. She has also provided support/technical assistance for contract development and negotiations to the leadership team as they develop and implement new program initiatives. She was a recipient of the 2016-2017 HHS Departmental Award for Excellence in Management and was recognized for her outstanding services by the District Department of Health.

Kristanya A. Knutsen
Audit Resolution Manager
Administration for Children and Families, HHS

Manager for the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Audit Resolution Team. Ms. Knutsen was previously an Auditor based out of the New York City office working with the ACF's mandatory and discretionary programs, as well as the Office of Head Start's Disaster Recovery Team. Prior to her employment with ACF, Ms. Knutsen was an auditor for the Office of Inspector General, HHS.

Jennifer Lee
Program Manager
Alabama

Jennifer Lee has been with the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for 12 years and has served for 5 years as Program Manager with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). She provides technical assistance to and oversees the monitoring of the LIHEAP subgrantees which include twenty community action agencies and one non-profit. Jennifer acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree in Regional and Urban Planning from the University of Alabama and a Master of Public Administration from Auburn University Montgomery.

Leslie Ann Lesko
Program Manager
Illinois

Leslie Ann has been the State of Illinois LIHEAP Program Manager for 5 years. Prior to her role as Program Manager, Leslie Ann worked as a LIHEAP Grant Manager for 15 years. In addition to working with LIHEAP, Leslie Ann also had responsibilities with the Community Services Block Grant and the Weatherization Assistance Program. Leslie Ann started her State career in 1996, and spent 5 years as a Public Aid Caseworker maintaining TANF, Food Stamps, and Medicaid benefits. Leslie Ann's main hobby is as a Girl Scouts Leader for 2 Troops. Leslie Ann and her husband have 5 children, 3 grandchildren, and 2 grandchildren on the way.

Sara Loewen
Bureau Chief, Human and Community Services Division
Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services

Sara Loewen joined Montana's Community and Energy Assistance team in January of 2018. She has spent the last 20 years in public service as a public school teacher and administrator and statewide program manager. She brings a dedication to improving the circumstances of those around her. She and her husband along with their two children enjoy recreating in Montana's great outdoors.

Bernadette “Bern” Panteah
Director, Division of Education and Training
Pueblo of Zuni, New Mexico

Bern is an enrolled tribal member of the Pueblo of Zuni and is the current Director for Division of Education and Training for the Pueblo of Zuni Organization. Ms. Panteah is responsible for the direct oversight and administration of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Public Law 102-477 program which provides employment, education and related training services for the Pueblo of Zuni residents. Ms. Panteah also oversees Zuni Head Start, Zuni Public Library, KSHI Radio Station and A: Shiwi College and Career Readiness Center. Ms. Panteah has been employed with the Pueblo of Zuni for over 18 years in various capacities and is a certified Public Law 102-477 Director. She currently serves as a co-chair for New Mexico Native American Workforce Partners, Public Information Officer for Zuni Emergency Management Incident Response and is a member of the Tribal Advisory Panel for Zuni Health Initiative.

Ms. Panteah earned her Bachelor of Liberal Arts Degree through the University of New Mexico. Prior to her employment with the Pueblo of Zuni, she served as the Day Services Manager, Special Olympics Coordinator, Vocational Profile and Recycling Operations Coordinator for Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises Inc. Ms. Panteah has been involved with Zuni’s Main Street Project, Deer Hill Expedition community services and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program for eleven (11) years as a Tax Preparer/Quality Reviewer/Site Coordinator for the Zuni community in partnership with United Way and Tax Help NM. Outside of her employment, she has served two terms with the Zuni Head Start Parent Policy Council as a Vice President and President, and served two years as a Zuni Public School District Board member.

Ms. Panteah has over 18 years of experience working in human services. She is a passionate supporter of new training opportunities, and implementing processes that are efficient in the meeting the needs of Zuni community members.

Mili Patel
Senior Policy Analyst
Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response

Mili Patel joined ACF’s Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response as a Supervisory Emergency Management Analyst. She most recently provided policy support during OHSEPR’s Hurricane Laura mission and the ACF COVID-19 response. Previously, Ms. Patel worked at HHS’ Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response in the Office of Planning and Policy, focusing on integrating the needs of at-risk individuals into disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. Ms. Patel earned her Juris Doctor and Master in Public Health in Epidemiology.

Iris Pennington
LIHEAP Grants Manager
Arkansas, Division of Environmental Quality

Iris Pennington is currently the LIHEAP Grants Manager at Arkansas Energy & Environment | Division of Environmental Quality | Office of Energy. She has worked for the State of Arkansas in various positions for the past 12 years. Prior to working in the public sector, Iris worked in private sector in the

telecommunications and medical insurance industries. She worked in positions that encompassed customer service, accounting, and contract compliance. Iris earned an Associate Degree in Electronics Technology, a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, and a Master of Business Administration. Iris is the adopted mother of three adult children and one teenager who along with her 88 year old mother are a great source of joy for her; all of whom she cared for while perusing her educational goals. Iris' number one goal for Arkansas LIHEAP is to be an accessible resource for Arkansas citizens.

Jeffrey Polich
Counsel
Office of the General Counsel, HHS

Jeff Polich is an attorney with the Children, Families, and Aging Division of the HHS Office of the General Counsel (OGC). His primary focus is on block grant programs, including the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). He joined OGC in 2007 and has served LIHEAP since 2009. Prior to joining OGC, Jeff was a policy specialist with the Child Care Bureau (now Office of Child Care) of ACF, where he worked on issues related to CCDF. He also has experience working at a private law firm, where he assisted clients with banking and real estate transactions. Jeff earned his Juris Doctor from the William and Mary School of Law in 2000 and Bachelor of Arts in political science and economics from the University of Michigan in 1995. He is a member of the Texas Bar.

Thomas Hartnett Russell
Community Programs Manager
Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority

Originally born in New Jersey, Thomas Hartnett-Russell represents his adopted home state of Indiana, where he has resided for over a decade. After beginning his professional career in human services working with the developmentally disabled population, Mr. Hartnett-Russell began working with low-income households in the autumn of 2011 at his local Community Action Program. In early 2019, Mr. Hartnett-Russell accepted a new role with the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority, where he is proud to currently serve as Community Programs Manager – Energy Assistance Program. He is also a regional representative on the board of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association.

Brian Sarensen
Program Manager
Washington

Brian Sarensen has worked for the Washington State Department of Commerce since September 2019 as the LIHEAP Program Manager. He previously worked for Pierce County Human Services for 19 years in various programs including Employment Programs, Developmental Disabilities, Home Repair, Weatherization, and Energy Assistance. He has held supervisory roles in each of the programs and for the five year prior to coming to the Department of Commerce he was the Program Manager for Energy Assistance, Home Repair, and Weatherization.

Sheri Shepherd
Energy Services Specialist
DPHHS/IHSB

Sheri Shepherd, a proud Montana native, attended Carroll College in Helena Montana where she met her husband. They moved to Eastern Montana where she started working at a Community Action Agency in 2002 and became a state LIHEAP monitor in 2007. She feels blessed to be involved in a program that provides such important services to those in need.

Tracy Smetana
Energy Assistance Program Planner
Minnesota Department of Commerce

Tracy Smetana has been with Minnesota's Energy Assistance Program for five years, first as a Program Performance Auditor and currently as a Planner. In addition, she teaches Public Administration Foundations at Metropolitan State University. Tracy has extensive experience working with public programs, including Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, Telephone Discount Program, and employment and training programs for public assistance recipients. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of Saint Thomas and a Master of Arts in Public Administration from Metropolitan State University. In her free time, Tracy enjoys traveling, scrapbooking, and gardening.

Erin Steuer
Project Director
National Center for Appropriate Technology

Erin Steuer is the Project Director for the LIHEAP Clearinghouse and National Energy Assistance Referral service at the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), based in Montana. She joined the team after 12 years working with community and non-profit organizations where she led efforts in community assessment, program evaluation, and strategic planning. She most recently worked as the Energy and Community Services Specialist for the State of Montana, where she worked on LIHEAP, Weatherization, CSBG, and the Emergency Solutions block grants.

Denise Surber
Program Manger
Virginia Department of Social Services

Denise Surber has been the Program Manager with the Virginia Department of Social Services since October 2019. She has 5 staff members at the State/Home Office. She works with staff in 120 local departments of social services across the Commonwealth. She has been with local, regional, and state departments of Social Services in Virginia since 1993 working with SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Employment Services, and, most recently, Energy Assistance.

Melissa Torgerson
Owner
Verve Associates, LLC

Melissa Torgerson has over 25 years of experience as a direct service provider, program manager, and consultant for non-profit and government agencies. She served six years at Oregon Housing & Community Services, overseeing LIHEAP and other low-income assistance programs. She has been a part of the LIHEAP Program Integrity Workgroup and the LIHEAP Performance Measures Implementation Workgroup, and serves as a consultant for APPRISE, NEADA, and NASCSP--providing training on all aspects of LIHEAP and other federal program management.

Benita Turner
Accountant/Office of Inspector General Liaison
Administration for Children and Families, HHS

Benita has worked with ACF for over 15 years, operating primarily in the program and payment integrity arenas. Her responsibilities include coordinating ACF's compliance with the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 and Appendix C of OMB Circular A-123, Requirements for Payment Integrity Improvement. Benita also serves as the ACF Office of Inspector General Liaison (OIG) for which she is responsible for coordinating all OIG engagements relating to the grantee. After 15+ years as a contractor, Benita recently joined ACF as a federal employee.