

Leadership Remarks**Lisa Ram3rez, EdD**

Director

USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

Dr. Lisa R. Ram3rez recently served as the Chief Innovation Officer for Lubbock ISD. She relocated to Lubbock from Washington, DC where she served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. In this role, she oversaw a broad range of management, policy, and program functions.

Dr. Ram3rez also served as the Director of the Office of Migrant Education and the Director for the Office of School Support and Rural Programs in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). Dr. Ram3rez joined the U.S. Department of Education in 2006, when she was appointed Group Leader for the discretionary grants team, which plans and coordinates the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and the then active Migrant Education Even Start (MEES) program. After only one and a half years in her new role, she was promoted to Director of the Office of Migrant Education, where she led the planning and coordination of all aspects of the various programs, including grant and contract administration, policy, evaluation, and special initiatives. In 2015, she added the Office of School Support and Rural Programs to her portfolio. Even with dwindling resources including a reduction in staff, Dr. Ram3rez has continued to inspire the staff in such a way that they have developed their own leadership skills and have become motivated to produce consistently higher and more effective results, both inside the office and with the field of grantees.

The daughter of migrant workers and a former migrant worker herself, Dr. Ram3rez left the fields to serve in the United States Army Reserves. She financed portions of her college education through the GI Bill and began her career as an educator in 1992, first as a middle and high school teacher in English and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Texas, then serving as Assistant Principal and Principal. In 2004, Dr. Ram3rez took on the challenge of opening the Lubbock Independent School District's first charter campus, the Ram3rez Charter School. Dr. Lisa R. Ram3rez brings a unique combination of personal and professional experiences to help improve the academic success of students across the country. A dynamic, change agent at heart, Dr. Ram3rez has had a powerful impact on the various staffs and offices where she has worked. Correspondingly, Dr. Ramirez was recognized within the Department for her unique positive spirit, notable intelligence and outstanding leadership.

Born in Chicago, but a Texan at heart, Dr. Ram3rez received her B.A., M.Ed., and Ed.D. degrees from Texas Tech University, in Lubbock, Texas. A life-long learner, she is an alumna of the Executive Leadership program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the National Hispana Leadership Institute. She is also a Pahara-Aspen Institute Fellow. Dr. Ram3rez enjoys running, hiking, writing and the study of film/world cinema. Dr. Ram3rez currently lives with her husband, two children and two family dogs in Alexandria, Virginia.



Melissa Rogers, PhD, JD

Executive Director, White House Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships
Senior Advisor to the President for Faith and Public Policy

Melissa Rogers is Executive Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and Senior Director for Faith and Public Policy within the Domestic Policy Council. Rogers previously served in the Obama Administration, as Visiting Professor at Wake Forest University School of Divinity, as Executive Director of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, as General Counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, and as a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. She is a graduate of Baylor University and University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Partnerships Panel



Monica McCann

Associate Director – Resourceful Communities
The Conservation Fund

Monica focuses on a specialized program of The Conservation Fund that works with community organizations across North Carolina. She leads the Food & Farm Initiative, supporting community groups and small farmers to develop innovative food projects to serve vulnerable populations. During her 10 years at The Conservation Fund, Monica has worked to develop, fund, and manage various major initiatives of Resourceful Communities, including the establishment of the first community forest in the Southeast. She is also responsible for program development, fundraising and evaluation, raising more than \$2 million for direct program services.

Previously, Monica served in the Peace Corps as a Natural Resources Volunteer in Ecuador. Monica holds an M.S. in City and Regional Planning and a B.S. in Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Davon Goodwin

Manager
Sandhills AGInnovation Center

Davon Goodwin grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but has rooted himself in North Carolina for over a decade now, consistently evidencing his dual commitment to agriculture and community. Davon holds a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, where he studied biology with a concentration in botany. While in college, Davon enlisted in the Army Reserve; he served in Iraq and Afghanistan, where he earned a Purple Heart after he was wounded by an improvised explosive device (IED).

Since 2012, Davon has been working with Growing Change, a nonprofit organization that is transforming

former North Carolina prisons into therapeutic farms and community centers where youth and veterans serve in leadership roles. Through Growing Change, Davon has served as a teacher and mentor to youth who have themselves been impacted by the juvenile justice system. He has helped support Growing Change's youth as they have become statewide leaders in CEFS' Food Youth Initiative, a network of young people doing food justice work in their communities across North Carolina, as well as leaders nationally, sharing out this revolutionary model for community change.

As the manager of the Sandhills Ag Innovation Center, Davon is working to reinvigorate the local sustainable farm economy and support the next generation of farmers. He also owns and operates OTL Farms, a 42-acre sustainable farm located in Laurinburg, NC where he grows muscadine grapes, blackberries and vegetables.

Davon has received many awards and accomplishments. In 2017, he was named a Stone Barns Exchange Fellow. The program identifies food systems leaders that are striving to make a difference at the intersections of climate change, food and agriculture. Davon was also a part of the 2018 Documentary "The War Within", a video series from McClatchy Studios that chronicles the lives of retired veterans who lived through the conflict in Afghanistan and are helping their brothers and sisters in arms cope with the effects of PTSD. Davon Goodwin is a driver of change, and truly a Local Food Hero!



Rev. Dr. Tony W. Barr, Sr.
Executive Secretary-Treasurer
North Carolina General Baptist State Convention

Reverend Dr. Tony W. Barr Sr. is a dedicated preacher/teacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the last 23 years. His life is dedicated to living by example and encouraging men and women how to live up to their full potential in Christ. Tony has more than a decade and a half of pastoring, counseling, and mentoring people through the stages of discipleship, which fulfills his life mantra of "building the church that Christ is looking for, one person at a time".

Earning the Doctor of Ministry degree from Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia, Dr. Barr's education matriculation includes the Master of Divinity from Apex School of Theology in Durham, North Carolina. Barr also holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Information Systems from Winston-Salem State University and an Associate in Applied Science from Wilks Community College in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Tony's matriculation in the corporate arena spanned two decades, where he experienced immense success beginning from entry level and climaxing in management. Before entering ministry full time, he last served as a University Account Manager overseeing 490 college and university accounts throughout North & South Carolina. During this time, he managed and grew revenue in excess of 25 million dollars annually and built relationships with Presidential/C-level officers.

One of Tony's greatest honors is the Lord entrusting the leadership of several churches to him over the past 19 years. From 2000-2006 he Pastored Emmanuel Baptist Church of Thomasville, NC. In 2008-2009 he served as Interim Pastor of New Breed Baptist Church of Cary, NC. From 2009-2016 Tony Served as Senior Pastor of

Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church of Wadesboro, NC. 2017- 2018 he served the Friendship Baptist Church of Thomasville, NC as Interim Pastor. 2018 – 2020, Dr. Barr served as Senior Pastor of Elm Grove Baptist Church, Reidsville, NC, before resigning to accept the position of Executive Secretary-Treasurer with the General Baptist State Convention of NC, Inc in February 2020.

Dr. Barr believes that Faith, humility and hard work will take you as far as you want to go.

Federal Presenters



Chad Parker
Acting Housing Administrator
Deputy Administrator – Community Programs
USDA Rural Development

Chad Parker has worked with USDA Rural Development for 29 years and is currently serving as the Acting Rural Housing Service Administrator, overseeing all Rural Housing Service’s programs including the Community Facilities Program.

In his prior role as the Deputy Administrator, Community Programs, he was responsible for Community Facilities Direct Loans, Guaranteed Loans, and Grants; Economic Impact Initiative Grants, Tribal College Grants, and the Rural Community Development Initiative. Chad has previously administered USDA Rural Development’s Telecommunication Programs; Cooperative Programs; Business Programs; Energy Programs and Single-Family Housing Programs. Chad holds a M.B.A. and a B.S. from the Pamplin School of Business at Virginia Tech.

Meeting Coordinator



Alex Córdoba, MPA
Program Lead
USDA Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships
Community Development Specialist
Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

Alex is the Program Lead for the USDA Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, leading secretarial and departmental initiatives with a focus on public private partnerships, capacity building, and nutrition security. He also serves on the management team of the Local and Regional Food Systems Working Group, as well as the internal advisory committee of the USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP).

Alex joined USDA in 2016 as a Presidential Management Fellow with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. He also served as a Strategic Engagement Specialist and Promise Zone Desk Officer with USDA Rural Development. He holds a BA in Sociology, and in Religious Studies, with a minor in American Ethnic Studies, from Willamette University in Salem, OR. He obtained a Master’s in Public Administration from the Cornell Institute for Public Affairs with a concentration in public and nonprofit management in 2015.