



BIFAD Public Meeting

Wednesday, June 28, 2023 | 1:30-3:30 PM EDT

Register before the virtual event: https://webinar-portal.net/webinars/tt/registration_230628.php

A Public Consultation on BIFAD's Plans to Propose a Subcommittee on Minority Serving Institution Engagement and Leadership in USAID's Agricultural, Food Security, and Nutrition Policies and Programming

Event Description

This is a public meeting of the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD), a *Public Consultation on BIFAD's Plans to Launch a Subcommittee on Minority Serving Institution Engagement and Leadership in USAID's Agricultural, Food Security, and Nutrition Programming*, to identify how USAID can best elevate opportunities and resources of U.S. Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) in the implementation of the U.S. Government Global Food Security Strategy.

BIFAD is a seven-member, presidentially appointed advisory board to USAID established in 1975 under Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act, as amended, to ensure that USAID brings the assets of U.S. universities to bear on development challenges in agriculture and food security and supports their representation in USAID programming. Responding to USAID's priority to promote and sustain inclusive and equitable engagement of diverse voices in Agency agriculture, food security, nutrition, and resilience programming, BIFAD plans to propose establishment of a Subcommittee on MSI Engagement and Leadership in USAID's Agricultural, Food Security, and Nutrition Programming this year. The Subcommittee has four overarching objectives:

1. Inform recommendations to strengthen partnerships with MSIs as thought leaders and implementing partners in USAID's agriculture, food security, and nutrition policies and programming.
2. Create a platform for direct dialogue.
3. Strengthen BIFAD's collaboration with MSIs.
4. Identify opportunities for USAID to engage with higher education communities, particularly MSIs and underrepresented groups, to develop a diverse pipeline of future professionals in global food security, nutrition, and agricultural development.

The establishment of this subcommittee is grounded in the recent Executive Order¹ on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government and USAID's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy².

This public meeting will provide a forum for BIFAD to share plans for a proposed BIFAD Subcommittee on MSI Engagement and Leadership. It will assemble expert panelists and invite stakeholders to provide input and feedback on the Subcommittee's objectives and membership. Public comment is invited to further inform BIFAD's efforts. It is an opportunity for interested parties to engage in a discussion on the engagement of MSIs in agriculture, food systems, and nutrition programming.

The objectives of the event are to:

- Convene stakeholders, specifically representing the MSI community and underrepresented groups in academia, to discuss the engagement of MSIs in USAID's agriculture, food systems, and nutrition programming.
- Provide key context by inviting expert perspectives on opportunities and challenges for USAID engagement and collaboration with MSIs in agriculture, food security, and nutrition programming.
- Allow for public deliberation around the draft objectives and membership plans for a proposed BIFAD Subcommittee on MSI engagement and leadership.

BIFAD and USAID will post a draft of the proposed Subcommittee's Terms of Reference (TOR) outlining the objectives, authorities, membership plan, and member roles in advance of the meeting. The draft will be linked to www.usaid.gov/BIFAD on June 14th. Members of the public are invited to share written comments between June 14th and July 12th 2023. Interested persons may e-mail Clara Cohen, Designated Federal Officer for BIFAD in the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security at USAID at ccohen@usaid.gov (Subject: Comment on the proposed BIFAD Subcommittee on MSI Engagement). All public comments will be included in the public record and considered in BIFAD's finalization of Subcommittee plans.

¹<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>

² <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/diversity-equity-inclusion>

AGENDA

Part One: Framing Remarks

1:30-1:45 pm ET

Welcome and Framing Remarks

Laurence Alexander, BIFAD Chair and Chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
1:30-1:35 pm

BIFAD Chair will welcome participants, invited speakers, and attendees, introduce BIFAD Members, and describe BIFAD's vision for a new permanent Subcommittee with a mandate to elevate MSI engagement and leadership in USAID's agricultural, food security, and nutrition programming.

USAID's Commitment to Strengthening Engagements with the U.S. Minority Serving Institutions

Clinton White, Counselor, USAID

Dina Esposito, Assistant to the Administrator, Feed the Future Deputy Coordinator for Development, and Agency Global Food Crisis Coordinator, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, USAID

1:35-1:45 pm

Reflect on recent achievements in USAID/MSI collaboration in agriculture, food security, and nutrition and recognize challenges and opportunities yet to be addressed.

Part Two: The Objectives of the BIFAD Subcommittee on MSI Engagement

1:45-2:25 pm

Launching a BIFAD Subcommittee on MSI Engagement

Henri Moore, BIFAD Member and Vice President and Head of Responsible Business, Haleon
1:45-1:50 pm

Outline the proposed focus and objectives for the main objectives of the BIFAD Subcommittee on Minority Serving Institution Engagement and Leadership in USAID's Agricultural, Food Security, and Nutrition Programming.

Panel Discussion 1: Embracing the Diversity of MSIs in Federal Government Partnerships

1:50-2:15

Moderated by: Henri Moore

- Dr. Marybeth Gasman, Distinguished Professor & Executive Director of the Rutgers Center for MSIs, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education
- Dr. Monte Randall, President, The College of the Muscogee Nation
- Dr. Venu (Kal) Kalavacharla, Deputy Director, Institute of Youth, Family and Community (IYFC), USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)

BIFAD Q&A and Discussion with Panelists and Speakers

Moderated by Henri Moore

2:15-2:20 pm

Part Three: MSI Technical Expertise and Subcommittee Membership Plan

2:20-3:00 pm

Framing Remarks and Evidence

Dr. Levon T. Esters, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, The Pennsylvania State University

2:20-2:30

Panel Discussion 2: MSI Expertise in Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition

2:30-2:55 pm

Moderated by: Dr. Levon T. Esters

- Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, President of California State University, Fresno
- Keia Jones, Ph.D. Candidate and MANRRS Region 1 Graduate Student Vice President, The Pennsylvania State University

BIFAD Q&A and Discussion with Panelists and Speakers

Moderated by Levon Esters

2:55-3:00 pm

Part Four: Public Comment Period: Deliberation on the Objectives and Membership Plan of the Proposed BIFAD Subcommittee

3:00 - 3:20

Moderated by: Ar'Tee Franklin, Senior Advisor, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA), Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, USAID

Meeting participants will provide feedback on the objectives and membership balance plan.

Part Five: Synthesis and Reflection

3:20-3:30 pm

Synthesis, Reflection, and Meeting Adjournment

Laurence Alexander

3:20-3:30 pm

Reflect on most resonant themes to refine the plans for the Subcommittee, reminding that the public comment period will be closing in two weeks. Opportunity to complete a post-meeting survey.

Speaker Profiles
In order of appearance

Please see the full [BIFAD Member bios](#) at this link



Laurence B. Alexander, Ph.D.
Chair, Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD)
Chancellor, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Dr. Laurence B. Alexander has served for eight years as Chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, a public historically black land-grant research university that offers degrees in more than 40 programs at the bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. levels, including extension services provided through a variety of programs in its School of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Human Sciences.

Prior to joining UAPB, Alexander had a distinguished 22-year career as a professor and administrator at the University of Florida (UF), the state's land-grant flagship research institution that is a member of the Association of American Universities. He joined the UF faculty in 1991 as an assistant professor and rose through the academic ranks to become a tenured full professor in the UF College of Journalism and Communications. While at UF, Alexander served as a Distinguished Teaching Scholar, Provost Administrative Fellow in the Office of Academic Affairs, Director of the Office of Graduate Minority Programs, Associate Dean of the 12,000-student Graduate School, and Chair of the Department of Journalism. He was selected as the 12th UF Distinguished Alumni Professor, was named a UF Research Foundation Professor, and was inducted into the UF Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars. His current community engagement includes service on the Board of Trustees of the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, the Board of Directors of Jefferson Regional Medical Center, and the Board of the Economic Development Alliance for Jefferson County, Arkansas. He also serves as Vice Chair of the NCAA Division I Presidential Forum and Chair of the Southwestern Athletic Conference Council of Presidents and Chancellors. A native of New Orleans, Alexander earned a bachelor's degree from the University of New Orleans, a master's degree in Journalism and Communications from the University of Florida, a Juris Doctor from Tulane University, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Florida State University.



Clinton D. White
Counselor for USAID

Mr. Clinton D. White serves as the Counselor for the United States Agency for International Development. He has more than 20 years of experience in the public sector and is a member of the Senior Foreign Service.

Prior to this assignment, Mr. White joined the Barbados-based USAID Mission in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean (ESC) in September 2019 as the Regional Representative, assuming leadership of the Mission's portfolios in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Barbados, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Bahamas. USAID's work in the ESC region directly supports U.S. foreign policy priorities, fortifying

efforts to stem crime and violence, promoting sustainable development growth programs, addressing food security, and building resilience to natural disasters and climate change.

Mr. White also served as the Senior Development Advisor for USAID/Libya, where he was responsible for leading the Mission on advancing economic development, democracy and governance, and stabilization programs. He previously served as the Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) in the Management Bureau, helping to advance key management and operational reforms. During his career, he has also served overseas as a USAID Regional Controller, directing financial management operations in numerous Missions, including Egypt (2009–2013), Pakistan (2008–2009), Senegal (2005–2008), and Ghana (2003–2005).

Mr. White’s career also includes working with national and municipal governments as well as a range of private-sector and civil-society groups, including those representing women, youth, and marginalized communities, in their efforts to improve the lives of families, communities, and countries.

He is committed to the goals of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Mr. White has championed partnerships between USAID and our nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities, helping the Agency inspire purpose-driven engagement to tackle some of the world’s most vexing development and humanitarian challenges.

Mr. White holds a BS in Business (Marketing) from the University of West Florida and an MBA from the University of West Florida. He studied Organizational Development and Leadership at the University of West Florida, as well as Public Financial Management at Duke University.



Dina Esposito

Assistant to the Administrator for the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, Feed the Future Deputy Coordinator for Development, and Agency Global Food Crisis Coordinator, USAID

Dina Esposito now serves as the Assistant to the Administrator for the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) at USAID, Feed the Future Deputy Coordinator for Development, and the Agency’s Global Food Crisis Coordinator.

Most recently, Dina served five years at Mercy Corps (MC), a global organization focused on helping build more resilient, inclusive communities in some of the most fragile contexts in the world through development, humanitarian response and peacebuilding programs. She served there as Vice President for Technical Leadership, guiding a team of subject matter experts who provide strategy, program design and technical support for Mercy Corps’ global vision and for country teams in more than 40 countries. Economic development (with a focus on agriculture and youth employment), food security, water security, and conflict and governance were her areas of focus. She also directed the MC Research and Learning team, which prioritized research on “what works” in terms of building resilience and advancing peace in areas impacted by climate change and conflict, particularly within the framework of food security programs.

Before joining Mercy Corps, she was the Director of USAID’s Office of Food for Peace, (now part of the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance), where she oversaw for 6 years the Agency’s then \$2.8 billion relief and development food assistance portfolio. There she provided strategic direction for the delivery of

life-saving food assistance globally, including in Syria, Yemen, Somalia and the Sahel and guided the office through a period of dramatic change. This included ushering in the scaling of cash-based food assistance, and the reformulation of 21 new or improved food aid products to better meet the nutritional needs of vulnerable populations - including the incorporation of Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods into the USAID food aid basket for the first time. She guided the creation of a ten-year strategy that committed Food for Peace to focus not only on saving lives and livelihoods but also on transforming systems and communities to reach sustained improvements in food and nutrition security. She also served as the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian response overseeing Sudan, South Sudan, the 2015 El Nino agency-wide drought response, and the food assistance portfolio. In that capacity she served as co-Chair of the Agency Resilience Leadership Council. Prior to this, Ms. Esposito worked for a nongovernmental organization, living and working in Ethiopia and Kenya, where she focused on governance, conflict and peacebuilding programs.

Throughout her career she has focused on the challenges of delivering relief and development assistance in fragile and conflict-affected states and worked to advance collective action and multi-disciplinary solutions to complex challenges. She began her career as a Presidential Management Fellow and Refugee Officer at the U.S. State Department (Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration); and as an officer in the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Office of Transition Initiatives. Dina holds a Master's degree from Johns Hopkins University, School for Advanced International Studies and a Bachelor's degree from Williams College. She is married and has three children.



Henri Moore
Member, Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD)

Vice President/Head of Responsible Business, Haleon

Henri G. Moore is Vice President/Head of Responsible Business at Haleon. Moore is also establishing the NewCo Foundation, where she will also serve as the president. Moore is responsible for the design, implementation, administration, and communication of the new Consumer Health Company's mission of delivering better everyday health with humanity to key stakeholders and communities in which they operate around the globe. Her role will capitalize on the 30 years of experience in marketing, public relations, philanthropy, community outreach, sustainability and sponsorships. Prior to this appointment, Moore served as Vice President/Head of Global Responsibility and President of the foundation at Corteva Agriscience. She was responsible for the development and execution of a Global Responsibility strategy, inclusive of Community Investment, Sustainability, and Agriculture Development in more than 140 countries.

Moore is active in community service that helps youth and young adults realize their potential. She serves on the Board of the FFA Foundation, Rodel Foundation, Delaware Business Roundtable Education Committee, and Food Bank of Delaware, as well as the Greater Philadelphia Film Office and the Satell Institute. Moore is also an active member of the Forum of Executive Women and the Executive Leadership Council. Moore received her Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Wittenberg University with a major in Marketing and a minor in Economics. She completed executive leadership programs at the Yale School of Management, Babson College Executive Development Center, and UCLA Anderson School of Management. A resident of Philadelphia, Moore and her husband Tony are parents of two daughters and a son.



Marybeth Gasman

Distinguished Professor & Executive Director of the Rutgers Center for MSIs, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

Marybeth Gasman is the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Endowed Chair in Education, a Distinguished Professor, and the Associate Dean for Research in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University. She also serves as the Executive Director of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Leadership, Equity & Justice and the Executive Director of the Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions. Marybeth is the Chair of the Rutgers University, New Brunswick Faculty Council. Prior to joining the faculty at Rutgers, Marybeth was the Judy & Howard Berkowitz Endowed Professor in the Graduate

School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Her areas of expertise include the history of American higher education, Minority Serving Institutions (with an emphasis on Historically Black Colleges and Universities), racism and diversity, fundraising and philanthropy, and higher education leadership. She is the author or editor of 33 books, including *Educating a Diverse Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2015 with Clif Conrad), *Envisioning Black Colleges* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), *Making Black Scientists* (Harvard University Press, 2019 with Thai-Huy Nguyen), and her most recent book *Doing the Right Thing: How to End Systemic Racism in Faculty Hiring* (Princeton University, 2022). Marybeth has written over 250 peer-reviewed articles, scholarly essays, and book chapters. She has penned over 450 opinion articles for the nation's newspapers and magazines and is ranked by Education Week as one of the most influential education scholars in the nation. Marybeth has raised over \$23 million in grant funding to support her research and that of her students, mentees, and MSI partners. She has served on the board of trustees of The College Board as well as historically Black colleges – Paul Quinn College, Morris Brown College, and St. Augustine College. She considers her proudest accomplishment to be receiving the University of Pennsylvania's Provost Award for Distinguished Ph.D. Teaching and Mentoring, serving as the dissertation chair for over 80 doctoral students since 2000.



Monte Randall, Ph.D.

President, Office of Executive Affairs, College of the Muscogee Nation

Dr. Monte Randall is Muscogee (Creek) from the Talladega Tribal Town and Deer Clan. He is a veteran of the United States Navy and the Oklahoma Army National Guard. Monte is a graduate of Haskell Indian Nations University, the University of Oklahoma, and Oral Roberts University, where he received a doctorate in educational leadership. He resides in Glenpool, OK, with his wife Lauren and three children.

Dr. Randall's research interest focuses on Native American culture, problem-solving abilities, and leadership. His dissertation correlated the significance of cultural learning in overcoming the impacts of historical trauma of Native American students. Dr. Randall is the fifth President at the College of the Muscogee Nation (CMN). He has worked extensively at CMN as the Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Affairs, Tribal Services Instructor, and Research Specialist. While at CMN, Dr. Randall developed the federal financial aid

policies, Office of Student Affairs, academic assessment plan, and contributed to CMN's accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission.

Dr. Monte Randall is an Aspen Institute and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow, and contributor to the Tribal College Journal. He volunteers as a community leader with Glenpool Public Schools, Okmulgee Chamber of Commerce, and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. Dr. Randall regularly presents topics relating to Native American education, culture, and leadership within the community



Venu (Kal) Kalavacharla, Ph.D.

**Deputy Director, Institute of Youth, Family and Community (IYFC),
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)**

Dr. Venu Kalavacharla (Kal) serves in NIFA as the Deputy Director responsible for the Institute of Youth, Family and Communities. Dr. Kalavacharla's portfolio at NIFA includes the Division of Community and Education, the Division of Family & Consumer Sciences and the Division of Youth & 4-H. He is responsible for both capacity and competitive grants related to minority serving institutions including the 1890 HBCUs, the 1994 Tribal Colleges & Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian Institutions and Institutions in Insular Areas. IYFC is also responsible for NIFA's education portfolio including K-12, undergraduate and graduate education as well as family and consumer sciences, and youth programming. Prior to joining NIFA, he served as Associate Dean for

Research & Professor of Plant Molecular Genetics and EpiGenomics in the College of Agriculture, Science and Technology at Delaware State University (DSU). Dr. Kalavacharla joined Delaware State University as an assistant professor in 2006, rising through the ranks to full professor. Since 2009, he served as the founding Director of the Center for Integrated Biological and Environmental Research (CIBER) at DSU. Dr. Kalavacharla was actively engaged in understanding and improving crop responses to abiotic and biotic stressors in plants by using tools and methods from classical genetics and breeding to genomics, transcriptomics and epigenomics. He has secured more than \$19 Million in extramural grants to Delaware State University from NSF and NIFA/USDA and has experience in many crops including Brassicas, common bean, wheat, switchgrass and salt marshgrass. Dr. Kalavacharla is very interested and passionate about experiential learning and developed a layered mentoring program for students and staff. Through NSF and NIFA funding, he strived to bring together cohorts of students from diverse student populations and backgrounds so that they can thrive in an environment that supports and encourages them. Prior to joining NIFA, Dr. Kalavacharla initiated and developed a Ph.D. program in Integrative Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences at Delaware State University to encourage inter- and multi-disciplinary research, training, and education aimed at developing today's scientists who can work in academia, industry or government. Dr. Kalavacharla has also taught a wide variety of courses in the broader biological sciences and has also served in industry.



Levon T. Esters, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, The Pennsylvania State University

Dr. Levon Esters is dean of the Graduate School and vice provost for graduate education at Penn State. He provides leadership and oversight across all of Penn State's more than 200 graduate fields of study, including 109 research master's degree programs, 99 professional master's degree programs and 95 research doctoral programs. A nationally recognized scholar on mentoring, equity, and diversity in the STEM-based agricultural and life sciences disciplines, he also serves as adjunct professor in the School of Integrative Plant Science at Cornell University.

Prior to joining Penn State in 2023, he served as professor and associate dean for diversity, equity & inclusion and faculty affairs in the Purdue Polytechnic Institute at Purdue University. At Purdue he served as director of the Mentoring@Purdue (M@P) program which was designed to increase the representation of students from marginalized and minoritized backgrounds receiving advanced post-secondary STEM-based agricultural and life sciences degrees in Purdue's College of Agriculture.

As the Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) Partnership Advisor at the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Crop Improvement, Levon leads the Thomas Wyatt Turner Fellowship, a graduate fellowship and faculty mentorship program that promotes collaboration between MSIs and Cornell University.

Levon's research focuses on issues of educational equity and access to education for marginalized and minoritized students with a concentration on the mentoring needs of Black graduate students; STEM career development of students attending Historically Black Land-grant Colleges and Universities; and educational and professional mobility and development of Black graduate students and faculty. In addition to being selected as a Fulbright Scholar, Levon also serves as a Senior Research Associate at The Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions (CMSI) at Rutgers University which has afforded him opportunities to engage in research related to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Levon earned degrees in Agricultural Business (B.S., Florida A&M University), Agricultural Education (M.S., North Carolina A&T State University) and Agricultural & Extension Education (Ph.D., Pennsylvania State University).



Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval
President, California State University, Fresno

Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval has roots in Fowler, a city 15 minutes south of Fresno, and his commitment to the region and higher education form part of his personal mission to promote the region's economic and cultural ascendency.

Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval was appointed to serve as the ninth President of Fresno State in May of 2021. He previously served as Interim President, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Dean of Arts and Humanities. Prior to his administrative appointments, Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval taught at Fresno State for almost 15 years. His area of expertise is Spanish and Portuguese poetry, and he has published on authors from Cuba, Mexico, Spain and Portugal.

Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval received dual B.A.s (cum laude), in History and in Spanish, from the University of California, Irvine. His M.A. and Ph.D. are in Spanish literatures, also from UC Irvine.

Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval's leadership has been recognized in various ways. He serves on a number of boards, including the Mountain West Athletic Conference Board, University High (Fresno) Board of Directors and California Teaching Fellows Foundation. He received the Horizon Award's Excellence in the Arts by the Fresno Art Council in 2019, was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi honor society in 2016, and, as a faculty member, received the Provost's Award for Graduate Teaching and Mentoring in 2012-13.

Dr. Jiménez-Sandoval is committed to the Central Valley region, and is proud that all of his academic career has been invested in promoting the enrichment of our students and region. With deep roots in the Valley and a strong connection to agriculture and the arts, he is committed to Fresno State and the valley community. He and his wife, Dr. Mariana Anagnostopoulos, happily make Fresno their home with their two sons, Arion and Leo.



Keia Jones
Ph.D. Candidate and MANRRS Region I Graduate Student Vice President, The Pennsylvania State University

Keia Jones is a third-year Ph.D. student pursuing a dual-degree in Rural Sociology and International Agriculture and Development in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education at Penn State University. Keia holds a master's degree in Agricultural Economics, and an International Master's of Rural Development (IMRD). Keia seeks specialization in transdisciplinary research. Her research areas include sustainable entrepreneurship, water usage and quality, international trade, and socioeconomic dimensions of environmental justice. Keia is currently serving in her second term as

the MANRRS Region I Graduate Student Vice President. During her undergraduate studies, Keia had the pleasure of serving as a USDA 1890's scholar at Virginia State University and interned at the USDA-ARS legislative affairs branch during the 2017 year and 2018 farm bill year. She secondarily served as an intern for the NAREEE advisory board and helped field applications, and finalize nominations.



Ar'Tee Franklin
Senior Advisor, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA),
Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, USAID

Ar'Tee (pronounced RT) is an Executive-Level DEIA Manager with over 30 years of Business Management and Information Technology (IT) experience in the public, private, and governmental sectors. As the Senior Advisor for DEIA in USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, Ar'Tee leads the development and implementation of the Agency's DEIA initiatives to improve workplace diversity, workplace, inclusion, recruitment and retention, sustainability, and accountability. He develops and communicates efforts to institutionalize the diversity strategy and promotes the development and maintenance of effective relationships with U.S. private business and voluntary groups, international institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, other government departments and agencies, and

academic communities in all the disciplines related to Agency programs and projects.

He previously served as Senior Program Manager for Diversity & Inclusion in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Office of Community Care (OCC). He created and implemented Diversity and Inclusion programming for over 7,000 employees across all 5 OCC directorates and connected D&I to the VA's core values, with a focus on a respectful work environment, exceptional customer service, and employee equal access to opportunity, empowerment, self-development, and training. Ar'Tee developed a virtual D&I program resulting in increased access for virtual staff during the beginning of Covid -19 pandemic. He successfully sustained the "see the person, not the disability" self-identification campaign. As a result, the number of employees with targeted disabilities has continued to increase and exceeded the Department of VA's national goal.

Ar'Tee has partnered with organizations in the public, private and government sectors to address immediate and emerging D&I challenges. As a trainer and a coach, Ar'Tee designs and delivers seminars, workshops, and trainings for Fortune 100 and Global 2000 clients. He has also been featured as a guest speaker and invited panelist at Fiserv, MANRRS, Delaware State University, Tuskegee University, Cornell University, East Carolina University, Duke University, North Carolina Central, Department of Energy, Department of Air Force, and National Headquarters Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity.

Ar'Tee holds a Bachelor's degree in Information Technology and Business Administration from East Carolina University and a Master's degree in Information Security/Computer Information Systems from Webster University. He holds certifications from MIT and Cornell University in Executive Leadership, Blockchain Technology and Diversity & Inclusion.