



# Aaron Johnson

Founder, Owner, CEO

Oasis Fresh Markets &  
Oasis Fresh Foundation

## EDUCATION

B.S. in Business Administration | University of Tulsa

## BIOGRAPHY

Before Oasis opened in 2021, North Tulsa, near Historic Greenwood's Black Wall Street district, had been labeled a 'food desert' for over 14 years. AJ became passionate about contributing to long term health for residents in underserved communities when he learned that the life expectancy was 11 years shorter than other parts of Tulsa. Now his vision to create an Oasis in the middle of a food desert has become a reality.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Oasis exists to eradicate food deserts by providing fresh and healthy access to all. Oasis Fresh Market aims to change the narrative of America's underserved populations by bringing grocery innovation to food deserts across the nation. Oasis offers vital resources to families and connects them with local assistance programs that will exponentially increase their livelihoods. AJ is honored to build bridges for customers, community residents, and employees with valuable resources to improve health and wellness from a holistic lens. "The word Oasis means refuge, safe place, shelter," AJ says. "We offer more than just groceries. We're equipping people for life!"

## ORGANIZATION: Oasis Fresh (Markets & Foundation)

Oasis exists to eradicate food deserts by providing fresh and healthy access to all, as well as offer wrap around services such as rental assistance, financial literacy, clinical care, and workforce development to our community. All non-profit initiatives are funded by various grants and donations. Without this support, our work would not be possible. You can find out more by visiting this website: <https://www.oasisfreshmarkets.net/>.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(918) 935- 2092 | [aj@oasisfreshmarkets.net](mailto:aj@oasisfreshmarkets.net) | 1725 N. Peoria Ave., Tulsa, OK 74106



# Amber Arriaga-Salinas

Assistant Executive Director  
Proyecto Azteca

## EDUCATION

B.A. in Political Science and Psychology | University of Texas Pan American

## BIOGRAPHY

Amber Arriaga-Salinas joined Proyecto Azteca in 2014, bringing her experience as a political organizer, campaign staffer, and campaign manager. A native of the Rio Grande Valley, she holds dual B.A.s in Political Science and Psychology from the University of Texas Pan American, graduating in 2010. Amber currently serves on the Board of Directors for the RGV Long Term Disaster Response. Her deep connection to the region stems from the values her father instilled in her, teaching that "the world we have is the only one we'll get, so we need to take care of it."

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Amber Arriaga-Salinas is an advocate for energy and environmental justice, currently serving as the Assistant Executive Director at Proyecto Azteca since March 2014. She leads initiatives in housing, infrastructure, and sustainability in colonias and rural Hidalgo County. Her work includes addressing water quality, promoting sustainable agriculture, overseeing sewage facility management, advocating for energy-efficient housing, educating on solar panel installation, and enhancing climate change preparedness. In her role, she manages human resources, procurement, grant writing, civic engagement, and media relations, while also organizing community efforts and fundraising. With a background in grassroots campaigns and community organizing, Mrs. Arriaga-Salinas is committed to empowering the Rio Grande Valley community, where she is a native, and preserving its culture and environment.

## ORGANIZATION: Proyecto Azteca

Proyecto Azteca's mission, rooted in the hope of creating a more equitable society, is to build stable and vibrant communities by providing quality affordable housing for low and very low-income families, traditionally denied housing opportunities, and empowering them to become responsible homeowners. You can find out more by visiting this website: [proyectoazteca.org](http://proyectoazteca.org).



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(965) 702-3307 | [aarriagasalinas@proyectoazteca.org](mailto:aarriagasalinas@proyectoazteca.org) | 1601 US Business Hwy 83 San Juan, TX 78589



# Angela Chalk, PhD

Founder & Executive Director  
Healthy Community Services

## EDUCATION

B.S. in Communications and Public Health | Dillard University  
M.S. in Health Care Management | University of New Orleans  
Doctor of Health Administration | Virginia University of Lynchburg

## BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Chalk is a fourth-generation resident of New Orleans' 7th Ward and the Founder and Executive Director of Healthy Community Services, a non-profit focused on public health issues in the community. She is a former President of the Louisiana Public Health Association and has served on the American Public Health Association's Center for Climate, Health & Equity Steering Committee. Her work emphasizes Community Science, the Urban Heat Island Effect, and its impact on African American communities, aiming to address urban flooding, food insecurity, and climate resilience. Under her leadership, Healthy Community Services received the 2022 Outstanding Non-Profit Award from the U.S. Water Alliance. Currently, Dr. Chalk is a Visiting Adjunct Professor at the Tulane University Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine, Environmental Health Sciences Department.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Dr. Chalk's areas of interest focus on urban reforestation, Community Engagement and Outreach. Her research focuses on the Urban Heat Island effect and social benefits to disinvested communities. She is a sought out speaker in areas of resiliency, mitigation and adaptive strategies.

## ORGANIZATION: Healthy Community Services

Healthy Community Services is committed to educating vulnerable communities with the knowledge to make informed decisions concerning resilient sustainable lifestyles and nutritional needs by creating access to healthy food choices; leading healthy lifestyles inclusive of safe homes, workplaces & neighborhoods; and promoting the incorporation of sustainable green infrastructure alternatives into everyday living. Integrity and commitment are paramount to providing a successful, healthy service to those we serve. You can find out more by visiting this website: [www.hcsnola.org](http://www.hcsnola.org).



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(504) 949 9548 | [achalk@hcsnola.org](mailto:achalk@hcsnola.org) | 1855 Duels St., New Orleans, LA 70119



# Chuck Morse

Executive Director  
Thrive New Orleans

## EDUCATION

B.A. in Public Administration | Virginia State University

M.A. in Urban Studies | University of New Orleans

M.A. in Divinity | Union Baptist College Theological Seminary in New Orleans

## BIOGRAPHY

Chuck Morse is the Executive Director of Thrive New Orleans, a nonprofit focused on social justice by creating equitable opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Thrive emphasizes small business capacity building, workforce development, youth engagement, and essential resources, and acts as New Orleans' National Disaster Resiliency Operator. Under Morse's leadership, the organization tackles climate change by training BIPOC workers in stormwater management and assisting small businesses in securing green infrastructure contracts. Morse is also a key community leader, participating in various local boards and committees, such as the Greater New Orleans Water Collaborative and the City of New Orleans Climate Action Plan Diversity Committee.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Thrive New Orleans aims to join the South Central TCTAC Advisory Council to provide leadership and insights on sustainable energy solutions, focusing on environmental justice. Their expertise in building resilient communities and ensuring inclusivity will help integrate marginalized voices in decision-making. Under Chuck Morse's leadership, Thrive can offer innovative approaches to address energy and environmental challenges in the South Central region, positioning him as a valuable partner for meaningful change.

## ORGANIZATION: Thrive New Orleans

Thrive New Orleans is committed to racial equity by advancing new systems for economic opportunity, climate resiliency, and community stability. Thrive focuses on three areas of impact: developing a skilled workforce, building the capacity of small businesses, and engaging youth and families. You can find out more by visiting this website: [www.thrivenola.org](http://www.thrivenola.org).



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(504) 564-7739 | [chuck@thrivenola.org](mailto:chuck@thrivenola.org) | 1433 N. Claiborne Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70116



# Jaime Lawson

Community Outreach & Events Chair  
Houston Climate Movement

## EDUCATION

B.F.A. in Interior Design | Art Institute of Dallas

## BIOGRAPHY

Jaime Lawson has been actively involved in the city's environmental and social justice communities for over 14 years. She co-founded a sustainable living cooperative, served as the Community Outreach Chair for the Houston Climate Movement for 6 years, and was the Equity Lead for the City of Houston Climate Action Plan. With 9 years of experience as a Sustainability Consultant in the commercial green building industry, Jaime focuses on building an intergenerational and intersectional coalition to create a more resilient Greater Houston Area and Texas Gulf Coast.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

My interest is in serving on both the South Central TCTAC Environmental Justice Leadership Curriculum Committee and Advisory Council, serving as a representative of Texas. Along with my colleagues, we believe that all issues are climate and environment issues. It is the most intergenerational and intersectional challenge we face. In order to create sustainable change, equity must be key, but is often left out of the conversation. By working with communities from the ground up, from the beginning of initiatives throughout the entire process, and when possible, pay people for their time.

## ORGANIZATION: Houston Climate Movement

The Houston Climate Movement is a coalition of concerned citizens, activists, community organizers, NGOs, and climate and environment experts. Together, we are building a web of communities to share knowledge, contacts, and resources, creating a more resilient Greater Houston and Texas Gulf Coast Area.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(713) 815-0504 | jaimelawson28@yahoo.com | 4424 Bell Street Houston, TX 77023



# Jessica Diedling, MPH, PMP

Director of Community Benefit & Sustainability  
Ochsner Health | Innovating Healthcare

## EDUCATION

B.A. in American Studies | Tulane University  
M.A. in Public Health | Tulane University

## BIOGRAPHY

With over twelve years at the Louisiana Office of Public Health, she focused on improving health outcomes through data-driven strategies and community engagement. At Ochsner Health since 2021, Jessica oversees the Community Health Needs Assessment and Sustainability initiatives across Louisiana and the Gulf Coast. She integrates environmental factors into health assessments and leads efforts to reduce pollution. Passionate about data-driven storytelling, she fosters collaboration to address community health needs and promote sustainability.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Eager to join the Advisory Council for the South Central TCTAC Region 6, driven by my commitment to public health, equity, and environmental justice. Her background in data analytics, community needs assessments, and corporate social responsibility has given me insight into the challenges communities face in addressing climate impacts and advancing sustainable energy solutions. Dedicated to ensuring equitable access to clean energy and reducing pollution in marginalized communities. Her work emphasizes engaging underrepresented groups in decision-making, aligning with TCTAC's mission. She can contribute expertise in collecting and communicating community voices, as well as leveraging secondary data to support these efforts.

## ORGANIZATION: Ochsner Health

Ochsner is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, disability or any other protected characteristic under applicable law. You can find out more by visiting this website: [www.ochsner.org/?home=no-thanks](http://www.ochsner.org/?home=no-thanks).



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(504) 703-4364 | [jessica.diedling@ochsner.org](mailto:jessica.diedling@ochsner.org) | 1405 Poydrass Street, 500, New Orleans, LA 70112



# Jessica Dandridge-Smith

Executive Director

The Water Collaborative of Greater  
New Orleans

## EDUCATION

B.A. in Political Science | Xavier University of Louisiana

M.A in Political Science | The New School, Milano School of Public Engagement International Security and Conflict

## BIOGRAPHY

Jessica Dandridge-Smith is the Executive Director of The Water Collaborative of Greater New Orleans (TWC), focusing on community-led water justice and climate resiliency. She promotes equitable access and blue/green jobs through nature-based water management. With a B.A. in Political Science and an M.A. in International Affairs, she has worked with numerous organizations since 2005. Dandridge-Smith co-chairs the National Academy of Sciences' Climate Resiliency Roundtable and has been recognized as an Obama Leader and a member of the Grist 50 list. She also co-owns a Jamaican/Creole catering business.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

The Water Collaborative of Greater New Orleans (TWC) is a nonprofit focused on urban water management and water justice. Originally a grassroots movement, TWC now supports various stakeholders, including nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies, through educational programs, research, and policy initiatives. As the EPA Urban Water's Partnership Program Lead for the Lake Pontchartrain Basin, TWC addresses challenges like flooding and water quality with the "One Water Louisiana" initiative. TWC also co-chairs the National Academies of Sciences' Resilience Roundtable and leads the Southern Water Call, advocating for water justice and resilience in Louisiana and the southeastern U.S.

## ORGANIZATION: The Water Collaborative of Greater New Orleans

The Water Collaborative seeks to build a diverse network for all impacted by flood risk by focusing on equitable practices to sustainably live and thrive with water. You can find out more by visiting this website: [www.nolawater.org](http://www.nolawater.org).



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(504) 452- 8112 | [jessica@nolawater.org](mailto:jessica@nolawater.org) | 1433 N. Claiborne Ave., 201, New Orleans, LA 70116



# Kellyn LaCour-Conant

Climate and Ecology Strategist  
Taproot Earth

## EDUCATION

B.A. in Biology | Russian, Amherst College  
M.S. in Marine & Environmental Biology | Nicholls State University  
Ph.D. Candidate in Urban Forestry | Southern University

## BIOGRAPHY

Kellyn LaCour-Conant, a two-spirit individual from Isle Brevelle, LA, raised in Houston, TX, now lives in Baton Rouge. She works as a Climate and Ecology Strategist with Taproot Earth, focusing on frontline power and climate solutions in the Gulf South, Appalachia, and the global Black Diaspora. Her expertise spans restoration ecology, community organizing, science communication, interfaith leadership, policy, and research, with experience in various sectors. In her free time, Kellyn enjoys baking, beach volleyball, and horseback riding.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

As a Gulf Coast native shaped by experiences like Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, I pursued a career in ecosystem restoration driven by my love for nature. At Taproot Earth, I focus on restoring ecosystems with an emphasis on community and justice in climate discussions. I am dedicated to advancing energy and environmental justice for a safer, more dignified life for all and a sustainable relationship with the planet. As a member of the South Central TCTAC Advisory Council, I aim to leverage my knowledge of EPA Region 6 to better support grassroots communities and provide informed, accountable guidance based on intersectional justice.

## ORGANIZATION: Taproot Earth

Taproot Earth builds power and cultivates solutions among frontline communities across the US Gulf South, Appalachia, and the global Black Diaspora, advancing climate justice through Black Liberation and democracy. You can find out more by visiting this website: [www.taproot.earth/en](http://www.taproot.earth/en).



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(225) 263 3948 | [kellyn@taproot.earth](mailto:kellyn@taproot.earth) | 2010 Terrace Ave, Baton Rouge, LA, 70806





# Spring A. Gaines

Research and Policy Manager  
Center for Planning Excellence

## EDUCATION

B.S. in Marine Biology | Nicholls State University

J.D. and LL.M. in Environmental Law | Loyola University New Orleans College of Law

## BIOGRAPHY

Spring is the Research and Policy Manager at the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), where she develops and supports policy initiatives aimed at creating a climate-resilient, equitable, and economically strong energy future for Louisiana. She has expertise in marine science, education, and environmental and animal policy, having worked with organizations like Louisiana 4-H, AmeriCorps, and the Animal Legal Defense Fund. Prior to CPEX, she was a 2022 Sea Grant John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellow, where she worked with Rep. Nicole Malliotakis on advancing offshore wind initiatives and clean energy legislation in the Northeastern Atlantic.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

The Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) is Louisiana's only nonprofit focused on urban, rural, and regional planning. It collaborates with residents and leaders to promote growth and development with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Through its PowerUp Initiative, CPEX supports the expansion of renewable energy in the state. Spring's work with the council aims to ensure renewable energy benefits are accessible to communities across Louisiana. Her role helps unify efforts to reshape the state's energy future and foster a more livable and prosperous Louisiana.

## ORGANIZATION: Center for Planning Excellence

CPEX is non-profit organization that coordinates urban, rural and regional planning efforts in Louisiana. We provide best-practice planning models, innovative policy ideas, and technical assistance to individual communities that wish to create and enact master plans dealing with transportation and infrastructure needs, environmental issues, and quality design for the built environment. You can find out more by visiting this website: [www.cpep.org](http://www.cpep.org).



CENTER *for* PLANNING EXCELLENCE

## CONTACT INFORMATION

(225) 267-6300 | [sgaines@cpep.org](mailto:sgaines@cpep.org) | 757 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802



# Sylvester Reeder, III

Co-Founder & Principal

Houston One Voice

## EDUCATION

B.A. in Healthcare Planning & Administration | Southern University Baton Rouge, LA

M.S.C.R.P. in Healthcare Planning & Administration | The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

## BIOGRAPHY

I have 50 yrs experience as the President and CEO of multiple academic, proprietary and non-profit healthcare integrated delivery systems. Today, I am a retired healthcare CEO and Co-Founder of Houston One Voice, a nonprofit focused on remediating closed landfills in Houston to eliminate pollution and return land to underserved communities. Over seven years, we've secured commitments from stakeholders and government bodies to address the environmental injustices faced by poor, disenfranchised communities of color. I am fully dedicated to this cause and believe the TCTAC Advisory Council can help us develop strategies to overcome challenges from well-funded developers.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

Interested in advocating for the remediation of closed Landfills to eliminate its air, water & land pollution that has plagued, so often, poor disenfranchised Communities of color for generations. Returning that land back to the community to be used to develop a sustainable approach to solve that community's Consensus Most Critical Needs.

## ORGANIZATION: Houston One Voice

Houston One Voice is a nonprofit that helps communities identify solutions to their critical needs and act upon them. You can find out more by visiting this website: [houstononevoice.org/hov](http://houstononevoice.org/hov).



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(423) 503-6142 | [skip@healthexs.com](mailto:skip@healthexs.com) | 8211 Summit Place, Houston, TX 77071



# Troy McGee

Founder & Community Solar Consulting

WattsUp – Community Solar

## EDUCATION

B.A. in Information Technology Management | University of Phoenix

## BIOGRAPHY

Troy, a fifth-generation New Mexican with a background in computer science and IT, shifted his career in 2015 to focus on photovoltaic (PV) solar solutions for residential, commercial, and public customers. He is deeply committed to New Mexico's energy transition, working with organizations like REIA-NM and NMSEA, and advocating for solutions that benefit ratepayers and the state's economic and environmental well-being. After supporting New Mexico's Community Solar program, Troy founded WattsUp NM, LLC, which focuses on community solar subscriber acquisition, especially for Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) programs. His vision includes having energy storage or agrivoltaics projects at every high school, built by students, to inspire them and encourage careers in renewable energy.

## STATEMENT OF INTEREST

As a member of the South Central TCTAC, Troy will leverage his extensive relationships and experience with regional industry, education, government, and tribal organizations. His key focus is to act as a liaison between TCTAC and groups like REIA-NM and NMSEA. With a background in consulting thousands of New Mexico households on renewable energy and being a consumer protection advocate in the solar industry, Troy is eager to collaborate and share insights with others in TCTAC.

## ORGANIZATION: WattsUp- Community Solar

We are focused on making the energy transition in New Mexico benefit New Mexicans by offering solar and energy storage solutions for residential, commercial, and public sector client. WattsUp – Community Solar offers the following services: Community Solar Subscription Acquisition, PV Solar Installation, Battery Energy Storage Solutions, and Workforce Development. You can find out more by visiting this website: <https://wattsupnm.com/>.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

(505) 510-2040 | [troy@wattsupnm.com](mailto:troy@wattsupnm.com) & [troy@troymcgee.com](mailto:troy@troymcgee.com) | 1826 Cantera St SE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124