

2025
WCI 5th Annual Summit

Can We talk?

*“The Importance of
Cross Sector Communication in Emergency Management”*

Speakers
Bios



Russell J. Strickland

Secretary
Maryland Department of Emergency
Management

Russell J. Strickland has been leading the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (formerly Maryland Emergency Management Agency, MEMA) since July 2015 and was reappointed Secretary of Emergency Management by Governor Wes Moore in January 2023.

In this role, Mr. Strickland directs a department that has the primary responsibility and authority for emergency preparedness policy, and for

coordinating hazard mitigation, incident response, disaster recovery, the Maryland 9-1-1 Board, and the Office of Resilience for the State of Maryland. This includes serving as a direct advisor to the Governor during disasters and coordinating support for local governments as requested.

Mr. Strickland is an experienced emergency management professional who has more than 40 years of experience in the field of emergency services and first responder activities at the state and local levels of government, academia, and the private sector. This includes expertise in fire and rescue services, emergency medical services, fire inspection and investigation, communications, and emergency management leadership.

Directly prior to his appointment, Mr. Strickland worked as a Senior Law & Policy Analyst at the University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security (CHHS), where he led CHHS' work with the United States Department of State Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program and developed strategy for the Montgomery County (Md.) Fire Department to meet compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Mr. Strickland also has experience leading a cabinet-level emergency services department at the local level as the Director of Emergency Services in Harford County, Md. This position oversees emergency operations and communications, public safety answering points (the 9-1-1 center), training, and special operations among other responsibilities.

His executive responsibilities have also included previously serving the State of Maryland as Deputy Director of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency and the Assistant Director of the Field Programs Division at the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute, University of Maryland College Park.

Mr. Strickland has a Master of Science degree in Management from Frostburg State College. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminology from the University of Maryland, College Park.



Chas Eby

Deputy Secretary

Maryland Department of Emergency Management

Chas Eby is the Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), where he oversees all programs, operations, and administration. Chas has served in this role over numerous major disaster declarations in Maryland. During his tenure, MDEM has established the State of Maryland's first Office of Resilience and a State Disaster Recovery Fund. In 2021, Chas led Maryland's COVID-19 mass vaccination site campaign, during which the 13 state sites administered over 1.2 million vaccinations.

Prior to joining MDEM, he was the Chief Planner for Emergency Preparedness at the Maryland Department of Health and served as the Pandemic Influenza Coordinator during the 2009-10 H1N1 influenza pandemic.

Chas holds a Master of Arts degree in Security Studies from the Naval Postgraduate School. Chas has completed the FEMA National Emergency Management Executive Academy (2015) and a 2022 detail to FEMA headquarters. He was a 2019 Henry Toll Fellow at the Council of State Governments and an ELBI Fellow at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health Security in 2014.



Sara Bender

Director of Disaster Risk Reduction
Maryland Department of Emergency Management

Sara currently serves as the Director of Disaster Risk Reduction at the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), providing oversight to the Risk & Recovery, Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation and Whole Community Integration branches. Previously, she was the Public Assistance Officer and Branch Manager. During her time at MDEM, she has also served as the State Coordinating Officer, leading damage assessment and

infrastructure recovery for three declared natural disasters, as well as the COVID-19 event. She is currently leading development of the new State Disaster Recovery Program, to provide critical recovery resources to local jurisdictions in the absence of federal assistance.

Prior to joining the staff of MDEM, she served in the United States Air Force and continued to serve as a federal employee, also with the Air Force, until September 2016, when she transitioned to service with the State of Maryland. Sara holds an M.S. in Management and Public Relations, and Graduate Certificate in Human Resources. Sara has also attended the FEMA Executive Academy, the Executive Leaders Program at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School. She is currently enrolled in the Certified Public Manager program at the University of Baltimore.



Tessa Lovro

**Whole Community Integration Branch Manager
Maryland Department of Emergency Management**

In 2022 Tessa Lovro joined the Disaster Risk Reduction Team at the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) as the Whole Community Integration Branch Manager. In her current role she manages MDEM's Whole Community Integration program which includes supporting the Private Sector Integration Program, Nonprofit Engagement Program,

the Community Outreach Program and the development of the Maryland Business Emergency Operation Center (BEOC). For more than 19 years, Tessa has been a noteworthy leader in the emergency management arena. Prior to working with MDEM, Tessa was the Regional Disaster Officer at the American Red Cross supporting the National Capital & Greater Chesapeake Region. Additionally, she served in leadership positions for her work as a member of the Red Cross's Hurricane Champion leadership group, a member of their National Response Management Team and has deployed in operational leadership positions to over 40 catastrophic events. Tessa also served as the Chairperson for Kern County's Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (VOAD) in Southern California and worked as an emergency management consultant.



Meg Kimmel

Chief Operating Officer
Maryland Food Bank

Meg Kimmel has deep experience building programs and creating campaigns that both get attention and create lasting impact. In her current role as Chief Operating Officer at the Maryland Food Bank, Meg focuses on launching innovative approaches to build a stronger food system and help more people become food secure.

Meg has a B.A. from Bucknell University in International Relations and Spanish. Meg has lived in many places and some of her favorites (besides Baltimore) include Bogota, Washington D.C., Rome, and northern California. Today, Meg puts her expertise to work for her home state of Maryland with pride.

Meg invites all of you to connect on LinkedIn and looks forward to sharing her perspectives with you.



Matt Cowles

Deputy Director

National Emergency Management Association

Matt Cowles currently serves as the Deputy Director of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) where he also served as Director of Government Relations from 2009 to 2015. In this role, he works with the Executive Director on the strategic priorities and management of the association while maintaining direct responsibility for the staff, budget, and priorities of the Washington, D.C. office where he is the liaison between State emergency management directors, Members of Congress, Federal agencies, and partner organizations.

During the three year hiatus from NEMA (2015-18), Cowles served as a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Appropriations Committee, Homeland Security Subcommittee. He was responsible for \$23 billion in Federal funding to the U.S. Coast Guard, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, and Office of Health Affairs within the Department of Homeland Security. During his tenure with the subcommittee, he also maintained responsibility for the National Protection and Programs Directorate.

Cowles is a regular contributor to programs at the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School having worked on strategic priorities, the Executive Leaders Program, and Mobile Education Team since the Center's inception in 2001.

Prior to joining NEMA, Cowles served as Senior Consultant and Program Manager at Plexus Scientific Corporation where he lead the team writing the *National Response Plan*, the *National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets*, and the *Interagency Security Plan*. He was also twice appointed by the President to the Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Homeland Security (DHS) as the Special Assistant to the Director of the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP).



Henry Bogdan

**Director of Public Policy
Maryland Nonprofits**

Henry is a graduate of the University of Baltimore Law School. He joined Maryland Nonprofits as Director of Public Policy in 1997, after a 20-year career in policy analysis, advocacy, and government relations for the City of Baltimore.

Henry is responsible for implementing Maryland Nonprofits' Public Policy program and assisting organizations with legal or practical questions arising from their own advocacy efforts. Henry's background in nonprofit tax-exemption issues, his broad knowledge of federal and state laws governing nonprofit organizations (including fundraising regulations), and his familiarity with government processes and the inner workings of state and local legislative bodies make him an ideal speaker and trainer.



Tyler Hough

Director of Government Relations
Maryland Farm Bureau

Tyler Hough is the Director of Government Relations for Maryland Farm Bureau. He was born and raised in Mount Airy, MD on his family's farm. Currently he resides in Mount Airy with his wife and daughter. Tyler is a 2019 Graduate of Trine University in Angola, IN where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Marketing and played Ice Hockey. Outside of Farm Bureau, Tyler is actively involved with 4-H and FFA, and manages Hough Family Showpigs.



Hon. Darlene Taylor

Mayor
City of Crisfield

In June of 2022, Darlene Taylor became the first elected African American, and first female Mayor of her hometown, Crisfield, Md.

After spending 20 years in Washington D.C. as a Program Manager on a classified Government Defense contract, she returned home in 2005 and started a non-profit, It Takes a Village to Help Our Children, Inc. Operating for

more than 19 years, It Takes a Village provides after-school, summer and college access programs for more than 200 'at risk' youth ages 5 – 17.

As Mayor she has worked on several transformative initiatives for the City of Crisfield, including a model collaborative effort for climate resilience through:

- FEMA's Building Resilience in Communities Direct Technical Assistance (BRIC DTA) program to Develop the Southern Crisfield Flood Mitigation Project Selected to Receive \$36M as the #1 Scoring BRIC Application in the Nation for FY23
- Collaboration Projects with Numerous Resilience Partners, including The Nature Conservancy, EPA, MDEM, US Army Corp of Engineers, MDE, Eastern Shore Long Term Recovery (ESLTRC), DHCD, DNR, SERCAP, Eastern Shore Regional GIS...

Other Major Initiatives In Work:

- Low Income Housing Initiative to Transition Housing Authority Residents to Home Ownership through Demolition and Rebuilding of Derelict Homes
- Major City Dock Elevation, Repair, and Transformation into a Venue through Bond Bill and Congressionally Directed Spending (First time Securing)
- Main Street Business Incubator Engineering and Design through Congressionally Directed Spending

Darlene is a graduate of Crisfield High School and Old Dominion University, a mother of 2, and a member of Shiloh United Methodist Church. She has served on numerous Boards and Committees in her community, received numerous awards and professional recognition, and was most recently appointed to the Governor's Coast Smart Council.

Darlene is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Eastern Stars Starlight Chapter #44, and the American Businesswomen's Association. She is passionate about her community and credits her family and her faith for who she is today.



Chief David J Bycoffe

**Director of Homeland Security and Emergency
Management**

Baltimore County Office of Emergency Management

Chief Bycoffe was appointed Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for Baltimore County in 2022. David has served as a member of the Baltimore County Fire Department for over 30 years. During his tenure, he served as the deputy incident commander for Baltimore County's COVID response. He also serves as Vice President of the

Maryland Association of County's Emergency Management Affiliate. Chief Bycoffe has earned his Master's Degree in Emergency Management from University of Maryland Global Campus.



Sarah Mikkelsen

Risk Analyst
Maryland Department of Emergency
Management

Sarah Mikkelsen is a Risk Analyst and GIS specialist at the Maryland Department of Emergency Management. Her previous work in public health with the Maryland COVID Contact Tracing Project fostered an interest in emergency management, and she joined MDEM in 2023. Sarah and the Risk Analysis team transform data from geographic, demographic, and meteorological sources into actionable

insights that empower state leadership to make informed decisions swiftly and effectively. She also contributes situational awareness products and planning section support for the State Emergency Operations Center during activations such as severe weather events, the Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse, and the DC Aviation Emergency.



Cory D. Edwards

**Business Engagement Program Manager
Maryland Department of Emergency
Management**

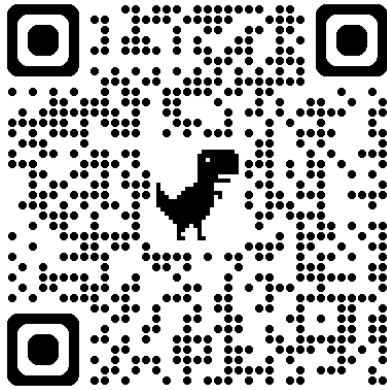
Cory Edwards is the Business Engagement Program Manager with the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) under the Whole Community Integration Branch. In this role, he serves

as the State of Maryland's Private Sector Liaison, facilitates the Private Sector Integration Program (PSIP) during blue-sky days, and helps manage the Maryland Business Emergency Operations Center (MBEOC) during activations.

Cory began his career with MDEM in October 2019 as a School Emergency Management Specialist, where he co-developed and delivered continuing education-accredited curriculum aimed at improving school safety for educators statewide. He transitioned into his current position in January 2022 and has since supported a wide range of roles and special assignments through multiple emergency activations.

With over 17 years of dedicated public service at the state and local levels, Cory brings extensive experience in building public-private partnerships and supporting community resilience. He is actively involved in his local community, serving on the executive boards of two nonprofit organizations, and is actively involved with the Maryland Emergency Management Association.

Cory holds both a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Maryland Global Campus. He is credentialed as a Certified Business Continuity Professional (CBCP), Certified Risk Management Professional (CRMP), and Associate Cyber Resilience Professional (ACRP) through the Disaster Recovery Institute International.



Emily Wesselhoff

President

Maryland Emergency Management Association

Emily Wesselhoff serves as the Preparedness Analysis Program Coordinator for the Maryland Department of Emergency Management, where she identifies and analyzes threats and hazards faced by Marylanders. She is responsible

for the Maryland Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Stakeholder Preparedness Review (THIRA/SPR), a federally-mandated annual process foundational to the National Preparedness System. Emily has also served in the State Emergency Operations Center and as a State Duty Officer for various incidents and events, including the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse and multiple National Special Security Events.

Since 2023, Emily has served as President of the Maryland Emergency Management Association, where she has substantially increased member engagement and financial transparency. She also has transformed the web presence of the Association by spearheading migration to a new web platform and CRM.

Emily is a graduate of the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security Emergence Program and holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, with a minor in public health, from Towson University. She resides in Baltimore with her partner Chris, their two special-needs cats, Weeble and Wobble, and their third (and much larger) cat Benny.



Molly Dougherty

**Director of External Affairs
Pennsylvania Emergency Management
Agency**

Molly Dougherty is the Director for External Affairs at the Pennsylvania Emergency Management agency. She develops strategic communications and leads a team of communicators, planners, and liaisons who work with private sector partners such as private sector businesses, non-governmental organizations,

and voluntary organizations active in disasters. Through the PA Business Emergency Operations Center, (PA BEOC), Molly works with businesses and emergency management to anticipate the impact of disasters and foster relationships to create a two-way exchange of information, before, during and after a disaster.

Prior to PEMA, Ms. Dougherty led Pennsylvania's Continuity of Government program. Molly is a FEMA Master Continuity Practitioner and a graduate of the Harrisburg University Certified Government Chief Information Officer Program (CGCIO). She has a BA in communications from Penn State University.



TOM MORAN

Executive Director

All Hazards Consortium

Mr. Moran serves as the Executive Director for the All Hazards Consortium (AHC), a regional 501c3 organization focused on cross-sector, multi-state homeland security, emergency management and business continuity issues in the U.S.

He is a passionate national spokesperson for innovation in the areas of public/private operational coordination and investment.

Mr. Moran supports the AHC's efforts to assist state/local government in their efforts to integrate the private sector owners/operators of critical infrastructure and federal partners into regional planning, education, cross-sector exercises and operational projects & initiatives in the areas of Disaster Management, Sensitive Information Sharing, Cyber Security and Solution Development to operational issues.

Mr. Moran spent over 20+ years in the communications and technology industry working in the areas of marketing/sales, customer service, and organizing national user groups. Before retiring in 2003, he spent nine years serving as a Corporate Executive Liaison to State Government Leadership on all matters including strategy, contracts, legal, and operations.



PAUL MILLER

**Business Continuity Outreach Senior Manager
Verizon**

Paul represents Verizon as a Business Continuity Outreach Senior Manager within the Global Event Management Center, conducting outreach and external awareness of Verizon's emergency response capabilities, disaster response and resiliency. During disasters across the United States, Paul leads the deployment of the Verizon Response Team. Prior to Verizon, Paul served 25 years as a New Jersey State Trooper.



Haydn Higgins

Manager
Deloitte

Mr. Higgins is a seasoned emergency management and business continuity practitioner with more than nine years of experience leading crisis preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. He has specific expertise leveraging complex information and data systems to support mission execution and bolster organizational resilience, and has led large-scale efforts related to program assessment, policy development, and strategic planning. Mr. Higgins has served as a dedicated leader in numerous operational responses

involving the whole of government, including the COVID-19 pandemic and influx of unaccompanied children at the southwest border, helping organizations execute a coordinated response and build resilience ahead of future disrupting events. He holds a Top Secret (TS) Security Clearance with Sensitive Compartmentalized Information (SCI) eligibility.



BRIAN KAMORE

**Managing Director for Crisis & Resilience Practice
Deloitte**

Brian Kamoie, JD, MPH is a Managing Director at Deloitte with over two decades of emergency preparedness and response experience, including responding to some of the most challenging domestic and international disasters and emergencies (e.g., the H1N1 pandemic, Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Fukushima nuclear emergency). He is a recognized thought leader on public health, emergency management, and resilience for federal, state, and local governments and the private and non-profit sectors. Throughout his extensive career, he has served in senior career and appointed roles at The White House National Security Council (NSC), FEMA,

Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, and the United States Naval Academy.



VLADIMIR TAMASHIRO-LOMA

Senior Operations Associate Team Rubicon

Vladimir Tamashiro-Loma is currently a Senior Operations Associate for Team Rubicon. A graduate of The George Washington University that recently earned the VA Professional Emergency Manager certification, he manages Team Rubicon's capacity

building, readiness, and disaster response in Virginia and Washington DC. He is also a Team Rubicon liaison at FEMA's National Response Coordination Center. He has been with Team Rubicon since 2014 where he has held various volunteer leadership positions in Field Readiness, Training, and Membership at the local, state, and regional levels until he was hired in 2018. Vladimir has served on the board of directors for 2 years with the Southeast VA VOAD and on the International Association of Emergency Managers Diversity Committee for almost 3 years. He has been on the board of directors of the VA VOAD since 2021, currently serves as the President of the VA VOAD, and is currently on the board of directors for the Virginia Emergency Management Association.



TRENTON CLARK

**Director of Growth
Endeavors**

Non-profit leader with 30 years of experience managing, guiding and directing mission driven non-profit organizations serving disaster survivors, families experiencing homelessness, veterans, and youth. Have led business development, strategic planning, board engagement, budgeting, program direction, employee leadership, and government relation functions. Has served Disaster survivors and their

communities through work with the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities and Endeavors.

In the past ten years focusing on Disaster Case Management Projects in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, North Carolina, Illinois, and Puerto Rico for over 17 Major Disaster Declaration responses since 2015. Has worked closely with National VOAD and VOAD partners developing joint plans and assistance for Long Term Recovery and Long-Term Recovery Groups.



Nitin Mistry

Chief Strategy Officer & Partner
KLSA

Nitin Mistry, Chief Strategy Officer & Partner at KLSA has over 25 years of experience in strategic management consulting driving mission focused outcomes for public sector, federal and commercial organizations globally. Mr. Mistry has a proven track record of delivering successful outcomes and business/mission impact by engaging in projects centered around innovation, strategic planning, emergency management planning, data driven

assessments, artificial intelligence & automation, technology transformation, citizen engagement & community development, contract & acquisition support, training, and organizational change management & communication. Mr. Mistry takes a data driven approach when analyzing assessments and developing readiness plans. By taking this approach, he can take a step back and view the entire picture before accelerating the development of plans, strategies and action-oriented exercises. Furthermore, through the use of innovative data integration, AI, visualizations, automation, and systems, Mr. Mistry is able to bring a level of transparency to allow for immediate action during times of rapid decision-making. Additionally, Mr. Mistry includes change management an important component of plans he develops. This allows for increased adoption, understanding/awareness, and compliance, ultimately ensuring successful execution for all stakeholders, communities, and constituencies. Mr. Mistry has formulated high-functioning ecosystems of unique and complimentary vendors, suppliers, and organizations. This critical component of emergency management ensures that teams and supporting agreements are in place well before the need arises. Prior to his role at KLSA, Mr. Mistry has served an Executive Advisor at NM Advisory, Portfolio Lead – Modern Work at Microsoft, Consulting Partner – Digital Strategy at Gartner Consulting, and various other roles across professional services organizations. Mr. Mistry has an Executive Masters of Business Administration from Fordham's Gabelli School of Business, a Bachelors of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Buffalo, Lean Six Sigma Green Belt-Trained from Villanova University, SCRUM certified form Scrum Alliance, and PMP-certification from the Project Management Institute.



Monica Kindle

Chief Equity Officer
Maryland Department of Emergency
Management

Monica Kindle currently serves as the Chief Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Fair Practices Officer at the Maryland Department of Emergency Management. In this position, Monica administers the department's EEO plan and ensures compliance with federal, state, and local civil rights laws. Before joining MDEM, Monica served as an advisor within the Internal

Affairs, Fair Practices Department of the Maryland Judiciary, Administrative Offices of the Courts (AOC). Monica brings with her over 10 years of professional experience within the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, specializing in human resources, learning, and organizational development. Monica holds a bachelor's degree from Missouri Western State University and a master's degree from Bowie State University.



Brenda Camacho

**Chief Financial and Operations Officer
Center for Disaster Philanthropy**

Brenda Camacho is responsible for all aspects of the financial and operations functions of the Center for Disaster Philanthropy. She is a member of the executive leadership team and oversees contracts, budgeting, financial due diligence for grantmaking, audit and tax compliance, human resources, information technology, and regulatory requirements. She is a seasoned nonprofit leader with more than 20 years of experience in social services, health care, and parks and recreation.

Throughout her career, Brenda has focused on building up organizations' infrastructure and aligning resources with costs to achieve growth and revenue goals. Brenda has led all areas of business operations, including finance and accounting, human resources, IT, and facilities. Additionally, she has provided oversight to events and conference teams and research and evaluations programs, and has collaborated closely with programs, development and fundraising teams.

She has led organizational diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, including the implementation of equitable hiring practices and learning journeys to raise bias awareness. She is passionate about aligning resources and mission work through the cost accounting matching principle, ensuring that programs are properly funded for the sustainable execution of deliverables.

Brenda holds a master's of accounting from the H. W. Huizenga Business School of Nova Southeastern University. She was awarded nonprofit CFO of the year honors by the Washington Business Journal in 2015 and DCA Live in 2021.

She lives in Leesburg, Virginia, with her daughters and three pets.



Emily Barson

Director of Policy & Engagement
GoFundMe

Emily Barson serves as Director of Policy & Engagement at GoFundMe. Emily has spent two decades on the front lines of political, governmental, and non-profit efforts. She has built coalitions that deliver meaningful results, working with states and other stakeholders and creating a reputation as someone who gets things done. Emily was the founding Executive Director of United States of Care, a non-profit organization working to ensure that everyone can access

quality, affordable health care. She also served as Director of Intergovernmental and External Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services during the Obama Administration, leading the department's work with state, local, and tribal governments and external stakeholders.



Dave Robbins

Risk and Recovery Branch Manager
Maryland Department of Emergency Management

Dave Robbins came to the Maryland Department of Emergency Management in 2018 from an 18-year career with the Wildland Fire Management program of the Maryland DNR Forest Service. In his current position as Risk & Recovery Manager, he manages MDEM's Risk Analysis team and also coordinates disaster recovery-related efforts. The MDEM Risk Analysis team compiles and analyzes data from a multitude of sources, to provide real-time intelligence to support decision-making.



Tiffiani Lawson

**Energy Program Lead, Mid-Atlantic
Groundswell**

Tiffani Lawson is a dynamic leader with a passion for building resilient communities and empowering underserved populations. As the Energy Program Lead for the Mid-Atlantic at Groundswell, she brings a deep well of experience in community engagement, youth development, and outreach strategy to her work driving equitable energy solutions across the region.

With over 15 years of experience in the nonprofit and public sectors, Tiffani has spearheaded impactful programs and initiatives in major cities including Houston and New York City, particularly in historically underserved neighborhoods such as Washington Heights, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. Her leadership has shaped organizations such as The City of Houston, Grand St. Settlement, Inc., and The Children's Aid Society, where she has been instrumental in strengthening communities through program development, management, and advocacy.

Tiffani is a proud alumna of Tennessee State University, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in communications. She went on to receive her Master's degree in Youth Development from the City University of New York (CUNY). A dedicated member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., she balances her professional life with a love for animals and a passion for international travel that reflects her global outlook and adventurous spirit.



Tonia Jacobson

Sr. Business Development Manager
Interim Homes

Tonia Jacobson is the Senior Business Development Manager at Interim Homes, providing quality, flexible and reliable temporary furnished housing solutions as a hotel alternative to corporate travelers, government contractors and employees, and private residents requiring accommodation during an insurance loss or emergency need. Tonia enjoyed a diverse career in telecommunications, technology and program management before entering the hospitality and travel industry, where she can create essential solutions for her clients. Interim Homes is a Woman-Owned Small Business and GSA-Contact holder,

headquartered in Annapolis Maryland and was recently recognized as one of the "Fastest Growing Companies" in Maryland.



Jorge Castillo

**Communications Branch Manager
Maryland Department of Emergency
Management**

Jorge Eduardo Castillo is the Branch Manager for Communications and Chief Spokesperson for the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM).

During his tenure at MDEM he has expanded the reach and breadth of its communication strategy, including forging new partnerships for information dissemination with entities like Clear Channel and 211-Md, and led the revitalization and rejuvenation of MDEM's brand. These efforts have propelled

MDEM to achieve the largest number of digital followers among any State Department in Maryland and a top 5 spot among emergency management departments/agencies nationally. This has been crucial in expanding the reach of MDEM's preparedness messages, crisis communications, and alerts. He served as the Maryland State Emergency Operations Center's External Affairs Manager and also oversaw the State Joint Information Center's Spanish translation program for all things COVID-19 during the early months of the pandemic.

His previous position as elected Chairman and President of the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce underscored his passion for equity, inclusivity, and collaboration, as well as his belief that Hispanic successes and contributions to our country must continue to be highlighted and celebrated—and stereotypes quickly addressed and corrected.

His career in business development, marketing, communications, and analytics, includes leadership roles at the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, R2Integrated, Passport Health, and the Baltimore City Emerging Technologies Center. Mr. Castillo believes that there are two foundations to an effective communications strategy: the brand and the team.

Mr. Castillo has been a speaker nationally and internationally, as well as a guest lecturer at Towson University, Loyola University Maryland, and New York University. He is a Phi-Beta-Kappa award graduate of Goucher College with a degree in Biological sciences with a pre-medical concentration. He received his Master of Business Administration degree from the Joseph A. Sellinger School of Business and Management at Loyola University Maryland. He has served in several boards, including the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (Chairman & President), the There Goes My Hero Foundation (Vice President), and the Joseph A. Sellinger School of Business and Management Graduate Alumni Board. He was born in Lima, Peru and currently resides in Cockeysville, MD with his wife Katie and their two children, Jorge Alexander and Juliet Catherine.

Brian Bauer

Assistant Director of Consequence Management Maryland Department of Emergency Management



2016.

Brian Bauer serves as the Assistant Director of Consequence Management and Agency Chief Information Officer (CIO) at the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM). As the Assistant Director of Consequence Management, Brian oversees daily operations and integration of the Daily Operations, Local Support, Preparedness, and Response Coordination Branches. As the Agency CIO, Brian coordinates all aspects of information management, data and data privacy, communications, digital transformation, information security, and information technology within MDEM. Brian has served with MDEM since

Brian has led the State through numerous incidents and pre-planned events as the SEOC Commander or as an Incident Advisor Including the COVID-19 Global Pandemic, cyber disruption incidents, continuity of operations events, tropical cyclones, civil unrest, severe weather incidents, public health emergencies, gubernatorial inauguration, large scale special events, and National Special Security Events (NSSEs) such as President Inauguration, State of Union, and Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress.

Brian also serves as the Deputy Coordinator of the Maryland Incident Management Team (MD-IMT), which is the State's Type-3 all-hazards IMT, and has deployed in various command and general staff positions for incidents including severe floods, tornadoes, landslides, line of duty death funerals, and special events. Prior to coming to the State of Maryland, Brian worked in emergency management for 10 years at the local jurisdiction level with Harford County Government and the City of Pittsburgh. In addition to working in the government sector, Brian has served as a subject matter expert and consultant for private sector organizations supporting the development of capabilities and capacity building across the planning, training, exercise, and continuity domains.

Brian holds a Master degree in Public and International Affairs with a concentration in Security and Intelligence Studies from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA). Brian also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in Political Science and History from Mount Saint Mary's University. Brian holds multiple professional certifications including Master Business Continuity Professional, Master Continuity Practitioner, Certified Business Continuity Lead Auditor, Certified Cyber Resilience Professional, Certified Emergency Manager, Certified in Cybersecurity, Certified Risk Management Professional, Certified Cyber Resilience Professional, and Security



Christina Ferguson

**Nonprofit Engagement Program Manager
Maryland Department of Emergency
Management**

Christiana Ferguson joined MDEM in 2022 as a planner in the Preparedness Branch. She joins us with a background in Criminal Justice and a 5-year position in the Offshore wind industry. Within the past year, she has transitioned into her current role as the Non-Profit Engagement Program Manager and State Voluntary Agency Liaison. In

this position, Christiana works to actively bridge community gaps, and establish and foster relationships with various non-profits, community, volunteer, and faith-based organizations by embracing the true whole community approach to emergency management. Christiana has worked in various activations, participated in exercises, drills, and trainings. She is a skilled planner and especially enjoys event planning with a particular eye for detail and design.

Christiana earned her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. In her free time, Christina enjoys outdoor activities, camping, horseback riding, and spending quality time with her daughter, along with her family pets.