

BLACK IN WATER SUMMIT 2024 PROGRAM

Hilton New Orleans Riverside | Chart Room, Riverside Building

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6

<p>2:00 PM</p>	<p>Networking (<i>Light refreshments provided</i>)</p>
<p>2:15 PM</p>	<p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Speaker:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ifetayo Venner, Arcadis & WEF Immediate Past President, Tampa, FL
<p>2:25 PM</p>	<p>Closing the Racial Gap on Water and Climate Issues in New Orleans</p> <p>In New Orleans, like many other cities, there exists a disparity along racial lines concerning the effects of water, climate, and environmental issues, as well as the investment and strategies for tackling them. At the same time, awareness and access to water-related careers has not been equitable, and the workforce engaged in developing solutions for these challenges, notably engineers and scientists, does not reflect the predominantly Black population of the city. This panel will discuss this racial gap and emphasize the significance of nurturing, attracting, hiring, and retaining a more community-oriented Black workforce in the water sector, and fostering the conditions for career advancement to positions of influence. It will also highlight the initiatives led by local community organizations in New Orleans aimed at driving progress in this area.</p> <p>Framing the Conversation:</p> <p><i>Speaker:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Angela Chalk, Healthy Community Services, New Orleans, LA <p><i>Panel:</i></p> <p><i>Moderator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anniestacia Denton, Moonshot Missions, Mobile, AL <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Angela Chalk, Healthy Community Services, New Orleans, LA • Calcea Johnson, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA • Anissa Hyde, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA, and Healthy Community Services, New Orleans, LA
<p>3:00 PM</p>	<p>Strengthening Black Businesses in Water</p> <p>Entrepreneurship can be challenging, especially for Black-owned or led-businesses, who encounter additional hurdles compared to other demographic groups. Despite this, these businesses play a vital role in delivering more equitable and inclusive water projects and services, fostering a diverse water workforce and wealth generation within our communities. Join us as we hear the stories of three successful Black entrepreneurs as they share their journeys and experiences in entrepreneurship. Also hear why their achievements are not only critical for their communities but also for our collective success, along with the significance of collaboration and strategic partnerships in driving successful outcomes.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kishia Powell, WSSC Water, Laurel, MD <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sean Benton, WetWork, Monroe, LA • Emmanuel Tuombe, ABES Engineering, Memphis, TN • Michael Hooks Jr., All World Project Management, Memphis, TN
<p>3:45 PM</p>	<p>BREAK</p>



<p>4:00 PM</p>	<p>From Advocacy to Action</p> <p>There are numerous Black professionals in the water sector working tirelessly to raise awareness about issues within the community, advocating for increased representation, retention, and opportunities for professional development and career advancement. Despite slow progress and frequent pushback, efforts have been made to create spaces to amplify our collective power, collaborate on efforts, and leverage influential positions. It is critical that we continue to build upon this foundation to drive more impactful actions that can shape a better future than our present reality. This panel will share personal water journeys, highlighting key requirements and initiatives to attract, retain, and develop the Black water workforce, while exploring strategies to effectively utilize our influence to make a significant difference.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tony Parrott, Louisville MSD, Louisville, KY <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason Johnson, WSP, Miami, FL • Taielorae Level-Young, CDM Smith, Washington, DC • Jayla Berry, NC DEQ, Mooresville, NC • Bernard Franks, Clayton County Water Authority, Morrow, GA
<p>4:45 PM</p>	<p>BREAK</p>
<p>5:00 PM</p>	<p>Leveraging Industry Engagement, Advocacy, and Networking to Propel Us Forward</p> <p>Engagement with professional associations, such as WEF and its Member Associations, is an important contributor to a successful career in the water sector. These organizations offer numerous benefits, including access to education, training, certification, mentorship, and other valuable resources. One often overlooked benefit of these organizations is the opportunity to network, collaborate, and elevate one's visibility and status within a sector that can be very relationship-driven. This is particularly important for Black water professionals, who often find themselves as the only or one of the few in their workplaces, leading to feelings of isolation and lack of support for career development and navigating the unique challenges of being Black in water. Despite these benefits, association membership, engagement, and conference attendance among Black water professionals are typically lower than their representation in the water sector and the general workforce. Our panelists will share their experiences with professional associations, how they have leveraged these engagements to advance their careers and drive the sector forward, and tips on making the most out of your WEF and WEFTEC experience.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ifetayo Venner, Arcadis & Immediate Past President WEF Board of Trustees, Tampa, FL <p><i>Panelists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Sanders, SUNY Morrisville & Trustee, WEF Board of Trustees, Syracuse, NY • Zonetta English, Louisville MSD & WEF Community of Practice Director, Louisville, KY • ValaRae Partee, Brown and Caldwell & Delegate-at-Large WEF House of Delegates, Atlanta, GA • Andrea Hall, Thermo Fisher Scientific & Chair, WEF Board DEI Advisory Committee, San Diego, CA
<p>5:45 PM</p>	<p>Wrap Up</p> <p><i>Speaker:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugh Sinclair, Arcadis, Hanover, MD
<p>5:55 PM</p>	<p>GROUP PHOTO</p>
<p>6:00 PM</p>	<p>Reception</p> <p>Reception with DJ – to include buffet, wine/beer, and non-alcoholic beverages <i>Reception located at the Hilton Riverside, Port/Starboard/River Room</i></p>
<p>7:30 PM</p>	<p>END – ENJOY WEFTEC!</p>

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Partner Sponsor:



Supporter Sponsor:



Contributors:

