

**Sustainability & Clean
Energy White Paper
Launch
4/22/24 | 11:30pm-2:30pm**

Run of Show

- 12pm - Welcome (Elisha)
- 12:05 - Opening Remarks (Brenda & Naomi Davis)
- 12:15 - 12:45 - Panel #1 - BIPOC Sustainability & Environmental Stewardship in Illinois (Moderator - Naomi Davis)
- 12:45- 1:00pm - Panel #1 Q&A
- 1:00-1:30 - Panel #2 - BIPOC Clean Energy Industry Leaders (Moderator – David Jones)
- 1:30-145 - Panel #2 Q&A
- 1:45-2:00 - White Paper Recap (Elisha)
- 2:00 – Closing (Khelan)
- 2pm-2:30pm - Networking & beelove product giveaway
- *Lunch will be served in the MSSR from 11:30-12pm

Panel #1 | BIPOC Leaders in Agronomy, Conservation & Sustainable Development

- Naomi Davis, CEO, Blacks in Green (Moderator)
- Selma Sims, CEO, Gardeneers
- Jose Miguel, Acosta Cordova, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO)
- Aniki Coates, Director of Social Agriculture at Bethel New Life

Panel #1 Potential Questions

1. What brought you to this work? How did you become concerned about conservation, food, and the environment?
2. Can you describe a win that you were able to help achieve in your community?
3. What is the most pressing issue for your community in terms of environmental justice right now?
4. How does your work support local food system development efforts?
5. What's some advice that you have for young people and others who want to join the environmental justice movement?

Panel #2 | BIPOC Leaders in Clean Energy Jobs

- David Jones, CEO, Lumena Energy (Moderator)
- Shirlondra Brooks, Associate Director, Workforce and Contractor Development, Elevate
- Shelley Williams, CEO, Intandem Workforce

**Sustainability & Clean
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4/22/24 | 11:30pm-2:30pm**

- Elisha Hall, Director of Social Enterprise – Green Sustainable Programming and Community Engagement, North Lawndale Employment Network

Panel #2 Potential Questions

1. What brought you to this work? How did you become concerned about clean energy and green jobs?
2. Can you describe a win you helped achieve that supported the BIPOC in clean energy jobs?
3. What is the most pressing issue or concern currently in the clean energy industry? Especially for Black and Brown people?
4. Can you describe some of the success and challenges of solar installation programs on the South and West sides of Chicago?
5. What's some advice that you have for young people and others who want to join the clean energy jobs movement?

Bios



Naomi Davis, CEO, Blacks In Green (Moderator)

Panel #1 | BIPOC Leaders in Agronomy, Conservation & Sustainable Development

Naomi is dedicated to self-sustaining Black communities everywhere. Her strategy begins with her aim to reinvent her childhood “sustainable-square-mile” here in the Age of Climate Crisis.

**Sustainability & Clean
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Launch
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She is the founder/CEO of Blacks in Green (BIG™), an urban theorist, attorney, activist, and proud granddaughter of Mississippi sharecroppers.

Her heritage forms the foundation for BIG's course in Grannynomics™, The 8 Principles of Green-Village-Building™ and The Sustainable Square Mile™ which Naomi authored and teaches nationally in community lectures and workshops and at universities.

Naomi serves as a bridge and catalyst among communities and their stakeholders in the design and development of green, self-sustaining, mixed-income, walkable-villages within black neighborhoods – so that every household can ultimately walk-to-work, walk-to-shop, walk-to-learn, walk-to-play – and neighbor dollars can circulate locally to help limit greenhouse gasses associated with transportation and manufacturing pollution.

She conveys the risks of global warming; the health/wealth opportunities of the new green economy; the power of neighbors to lead in their city's enviro-economic policy and practice; and the primacy of land ownership.



Selma Sims, CEO, Gardeneers

Selma Sims is the CEO and Head Grower at Gardeneers, Chicago's only custom full-service school gardens program, which built and maintains school gardens in 22 Chicago Public Schools and involves more than 1,700 middle-school student participants from Chicago's south and west sides.

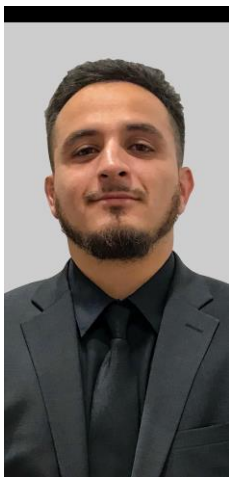
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As CEO, Selma brings an inspired vision to improve how Gardeneers' grows and distributes food, engages, and educates youth, and partners with the community. She also stewards donor relationships and staff empowerment for the blossoming nonprofit.

Selma, who was named CEO in February of 2021, is passionate about creating leadership opportunities for all staff and embracing the "human" side of human resources and non-profit leadership. Selma was instrumental in the organization's strategic shift to address the food and health inequities amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic through the launch of the Growing + Giving Initiative.

Selma currently serves on the board of Advocates of Urban Agriculture and is a member of Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton's Agricultural Equity and Food Insecurity Council. Selma is also a member of the Illinois Specialty Growers Association, the Local Farmer Food Caucus with Illinois Stewardship Alliance, and MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences).

Selma has been working the land for more than a decade. Before being named CEO in 2021, Selma served as the Farm Manager for the Gardeneers, where she pioneered new food safety policies and protocols for the organization's school gardens. Prior to joining the Gardeneers in 2018, Selma worked at Urban Growers Collective (formerly Growing Power Chicago) as a Youth Farm Instructor. Selma, who majored in Agronomy and Agroecology while studying at Iowa State University, now calls Chicago's south side home.



Jose Miguel, Acosta Cordova, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO)

**Sustainability & Clean
Energy White Paper
Launch
4/22/24 | 11:30pm-2:30pm**

José leads the Transportation & Mobility Justice program at LVEJO, which works on issues related to freight, EJ, and mobility justice at the local, state, and national levels. He is also the co-chair of the Transportation Equity Network (TEN) in Chicago. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Geography & GIS at the University of Illinois, and his dissertation is focused on the negative impacts of freight on EJ communities in Chicago, how freight has transformed since the deindustrialization period, as well as the role of low-wage labor in the growth of the warehousing boom in the Chicago metropolitan area. He was raised by social justice activists, and has been around the EJ movement since he was 3 years old.



Aniki Coates, Senior Manager of Horticulture & Wellness at Bethel New Life

Aniki Coates is the Senior Manager of Horticulture & Wellness at Bethel New Life. She oversees and cultivates Bethel's garden and its related programming and educates staff, partners, clients, and community about growing a variety of seasonal produce, nutritional health, food security, and environmental issues. In addition, she facilitates therapeutic horticulture sessions for clinical and non-clinical staff, partners and their clients, community members from Head Start to seniors, she has affectionately nicknamed, "our greatest experience leaders." Aniki facilitates Bethel New Life's VetHer program for women veterans across the Chicagoland area. She is a certified urban farmer and horticultural therapist through the Chicago Botanic Garden and City Colleges of Chicago, a certified beekeeper, and environmental literacy educator. Aniki is also a professional chef through Washburne Culinary Institute and a culinary nutritionist with a focus on plant-based cuisine and food literacy. Before Bethel, she has worked with many populations and service locations including children's hospitals, senior centers, refugee gardens, elementary/high schools, with veterans, justice-involved individuals and adults/children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, among others. She is currently pursuing her graduate degree in clinical mental health counseling and certification as a clinical herbalist.

**Sustainability & Clean
Energy White Paper
Launch
4/22/24 | 11:30pm-2:30pm**



David Jones, CEO, Lumena Energy (Moderator)
Panel #2 | BIPOC Leaders in Clean Energy Jobs

David Jones is a technologist, polymath, inventor, and CEO of Lumena Energy, a U.S.-based Energy-As-A-Service software platform. David is a globally recognized industry leader in Renewable Energy and a pioneer in Virtual Power Plant technology. He is a recipient of the 2019 Google Innovation Award. He currently serves as an Entrepreneur in Residence at The University of Chicago. He received his MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. With more than 20 years of experience as a technologist, he continues to innovate and push boundaries in his field and accelerate the adoption and proliferation of cleantech on a global level.



Shirlondra Brooks, Associate Director, Workforce and Contractor Development, Elevate

**Sustainability & Clean
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4/22/24 | 11:30pm-2:30pm**

Shirlondra Brooks is the Associate Director of Workforce and Contractor Development at Elevate, a nonprofit organization that designs and implements programs that reduce costs, protect people and the environment, and ensure the benefits of clean and efficient energy use reach those who need them most. In this role, she works nationally to support the design, implementation, and delivery of workforce and contractor development programs, leveraging her 20 years of experience creating equitable and inclusive programs that support residents in under-resourced communities.

Shirlondra works closely with Elevate's workforce and contractor development team to build and cultivate partnerships with organizations in under-resourced communities, creating access to solar training that leads to employment opportunities with family-sustaining wages. In addition to building partnerships, she also provides input on program market and community engagement materials to advertise program services and participant engagement highlights.

Before joining Elevate, she served as the Senior Program Manager at Women Employed, leading the Career Foundations and multi-sector bridge programs in partnership with City Colleges of Chicago, Chicago Jobs Council, the Chicago Citywide Literacy Coalition, and community-based organizations. She worked closely with post-secondary institutions and community training organizations to build pathways into higher levels of education and employment for adults with limited literacy or English Language skills to align programs citywide. She also worked for over 15 years leading the development and implementation of healthcare bridge and career pathway programming under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) and the Health Professions Opportunities Grant (HPOG) in partnership with Triton College and other partners and entities. In 2006, Shirlondra was part of a special projects team specifically responsible for engaging refugees of Hurricane Katrina related to housing, job readiness training, employment, case management, and other support services needed to stabilize their families.

In 2017, Shirlondra led Central States SER's partnership with ComEd for their CONSTRUCT Program, a 10-week training course designed to increase the number of opportunities available to minorities in Chicago interested in careers in the construction space. Her extensive background working with the Illinois Department of Human Services Work First and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP) to provide intensive case management, education, job skills training, pre-employment services, and direct job placement to help clients improve their work skills, with immediate attachment to the workforce with family-sustaining wages, has helped to refine and inform the methodology and approach to workforce programming across multiple markets and sectors.

**Sustainability & Clean
Energy White Paper
Launch
4/22/24 | 11:30pm-2:30pm**

Shirlondra received her Master of Social Work from Indiana University, and her Bachelor of Science in Human Services from Indiana Wesleyan University.



Shelley Williams, CEO, Intandem Workforce

Shelley Williams is an innovative workforce development expert with a unique specialization in the clean energy industry. With a diverse background in sustainable agriculture and renewable energy, Shelley Williams is dedicated to sourcing and cultivating talent to promote career advancement within the green economy.

As a passionate social justice advocate, Shelley is committed to championing the cause of the justice involved population and other marginalized groups who often lack representation in the workforce. This commitment extends beyond mere rhetoric to actionable initiatives, ensuring that underrepresented individuals have equal access to opportunities within the clean energy sector.

**Sustainability & Clean
Energy White Paper
Launch
4/22/24 | 11:30pm-2:30pm**



Elisha Hall, Director of Social Enterprise – Green Sustainable Programming and Community Engagement, North Lawndale Employment Network

Elisha is community educator and village builder. Elisha restores African healing legacies that have always accompanied African resistance and self-determination. He is the founder of the African and Indigenous Knowledge Institute (AIKI), a local bridge that developments institutions through interactive educational platforms and individualized diversity and inclusion support.

In 2018, he established the Respira Profundo (Deep Breathing) Program for pre-K students at Chicago Commons, a program that continued to operate virtually even during the pandemic. In 2016, he worked with members of Englewood and the broader Chicago community to establish the Ujamaa Community Land Trust. Elisha received his Ph.D. in Policy Studies in Urban Education at the University of Illinois (Chicago). His research centers on how storytelling can heal youth and adults especially when used as self-edification and character development. He fuses his movement work with healing justice scholarship to provide restoration for African and indigenous communities across the African world.